This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NEDL TRANSFER
HN 3KB2 X

THE CAGE

CHARLOTTE TELLER

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Robert R. Buchanan
18 Fisher Avenue
Newton Highlands, Mass.

D20487 Z56

HARVARD
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE CAGE

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE CAGE

By Charlotte Teller

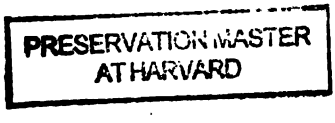
NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1907

Digitized by Google

KD 26487

COPYRIGHT, 1907, BY
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

Published February, 1907



Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

PAGE

PROLOGUE 1

BOOK ONE

CHAPTER

I.—THE BACK PORCH 7

II.—THE HOLLOW PEDESTAL 25

III.—DR. HARTWELL'S STUDY 41

IV.—A LOST OPPORTUNITY 49

V.—MAGGIE'S INFLUENCE 56

VI.—ROMANCE IN THE DUSK 62

VII.—KAFFEE KLATSCH 70

VIII.—FROM MRS. SCANLAN'S 81

IX.—THE CONCERT 95

X.—AN IMPORTANT INTERVIEW 102

XI.—AFTER THE MEETING 111

XII.—HER FATHER'S DECISION 123

XIII.—AN ACKNOWLEDGED TEMPTATION 140

XIV.—THE WORLD ENTERS 153

XV.—THE DAY OF INDEPENDENCE 162

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

BOOK TWO

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Return to Suspicion	179
II.	The Fire	190
III.	The Suspicion Confirmed	204
IV.	His Work and Her Honor	219
V.	A Morning of Gossip	228
VI.	Alec's Promise	238
VII.	A Visit of the Committee	252
VIII.	Two Decisions	257
IX.	A Chance for Strategy	267
X.	The Riot	277
XI.	The Mark of Men	281
XII.	Lange and the Law	303
XIII.	Frederica's Exultation	308
XIV.	The World Enters Again	323
XV.	The Day of the Law	333

Digitized by Google

PROLOGUE

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PROLOGUE

HE stood on the upper deck of a steamer which was leaving Hungary's only seaport. The houses on the hillsides, the buildings along the strand, were growing smaller and smaller; the sunlight lit them cheerfully as though to cast a memory of comfort. Gulls fluttered between the ship and the waiting specks of men and women on the dock. He saw one of the crew below waving a greasy dish towel from a porthole to the group of children seated on the edge of the dock. Officers of the ship were hurrying about in the first energy of accomplished departure.

The deck steward brought him the mid-afternoon lunch, but he refused it, for he was watching the steerage passengers, who stood unmoved, with their eyes on the shores of Hungary. They were massed in silence and made no sound as the picture grew more and more blurred. He knew what was in their hearts, for it was in his. They might have, however, the fear of never seeing Hungary again; he had the fear that he might. Not one sound came up from the hundreds standing there to show whether it was the courage of adventure or a reckless despair which had brought them to the great ship sailing for an unknown land. There was not a sound to indicate whether hope or desperation was in their hearts. It was too late now to turn back. Without volition they were being carried into their future.

Digitized by Google

Fiume was now but a streak of irregular white on the coast line, and he turned to go in, when suddenly from below came the sound of all their voices in a chant which must have been the song of the church. It came from them standing shoulder to shoulder as one man. And as he stood there his eyes wandered to the streak of gray that had once been his home.

But not once again during the voyage did they sing.

Digitized by Google

BOOK ONE

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER I

THE BACK PORCH

TO Mrs. Flanagan, who lived in the rear house and had her memories, the Hartwells' back porch looked like a booth at an Irish fair. It was curtained by the vines which grew in boxes upon the railings; they clambered up the posts to the Schneiders' back porch on the second story, and trailed down to the hard soil of the back yard. On either edge of the short flight of steps which led down to the yard were potted geraniums all in red bloom.

It made quite a bit of scenery for the Flanagans. Indeed, they had the best of it, for anyone on the back porch itself had to look at the Flanagans' house, which was small and dingy and adorned by nondescript garments of faded calico and flannel, flapping on a ramshackle railing.

Michael Flanagan was on the police force and could have afforded a better place had he had a small family; but there were ten for him to support, and Mrs. Flanagan's doctor bills to pay. One hope only gleamed through the murky present: that he might be promoted. Then they would move into a house that fronted on the street and had more than four rooms, and some chance for air on a hot August day, such as was now drawing toward dusk.

Maggie Flanagan came out to gather up some of the airing garments of her seven brothers and sisters. She

Digitized by Google

was sixteen, with tousled hair and bare throat. As she looked across at the Hartwell porch and saw Anne Forester ironing, she was impressed as usual by the appearance of Anne, whose dress was without smudge or wrinkle, whose face was without line of worry, and whose hair waved upward into the knot on the top of a well-shaped head. Maggie's admiration of this woman, twice her age and more, was that of a child for a princess in a fairy tale. At any moment Maggie expected to see white horses and carriage dash up into the alley gate and carry the princess off to that mysterious land uptown where she really belonged. But there she stood in front of the ironing board, one end of which was on a barrel and the other on the back of a chair, and there was the basket of sprinkled clothes in the battered easy-chair near the ice box.

"It's awful hot, isn't it?" Maggie called across.

"But this has to be done," answered Anne. She was always hoping to encourage the Flanagans to greater domestic endeavor.

"We don't iron; we just wash in hot weather," answered Maggie, "and we don't wash more'n we have to."

Anne was wondering what to say to impress her.

"Say, Miss Annie," said Maggie, "I saw your sister to-day in a carriage. She looked just grand."

Anne knit her brows.

"Just grand," repeated Maggie. "She had a white parasol. I pointed her out to one of the girls, and she was awful surprised. She wanted to know why you lived over here on the West Side when your sister was such a swell. She said perhaps you were disinherited. I told her it wasn't that because you never had any fellows hanging around——"

Digitized by Google

Anne flushed over the towel she was ironing.

"Say," questioned Maggie, with a touch of coquetry, "say, why *do* you live here?"

"Maggie, I've told you a dozen times." Anne was forcible.

"Aw, now," said the girl, "that ain't the real reason. You don't love those little Mikeys and Ikeys that come to your school, do you? You can't make me believe that!"

"Of course," said Anne.

Maggie looked incredulous. The pushing and crowding of seven little human destinies against her own comfort and pleasure had deadened her interest in children in general; and that anyone should choose to work for them when there were spacious rooms, a carriage, a white parasol, and the freedom from child squabbles—she could not sense it. She brought the situation as near to her understanding as possible when she said:

"I bet Dr. Hartwell and Miss Freda couldn't get along without you. Ma says they couldn't. She thinks you're an awful good worker; she thinks an awful lot of you, ma does——"

At that moment a shrill voice from within broke upon her stumbling reflections. "When do you think I want those things, Mag?"

Maggie took up the last tattered dress and disappeared within, saying: "You don't let me talk to nobody, front or back!"

The sharp edge of Maggie's question had cut through Anne's idea of herself: her real reason for living on the West Side?

She stood there thinking, and ironing with more energy than skill, for she had not been brought up to use an iron. In her own home she had had a laundress of her own, as

Digitized by Google

well as a maid and a seamstress. But one day, three years before, she had been much moved by Dr. Hartwell's talk to the Beneficent Society of the church, and, with the directness which was in everything she did, she had dismissed her three servants, packed her trunk, and come over to help him. And not only had she followed his advice and started a kindergarten, but she had insisted upon helping his daughter Frederica do the work of the small home. The two, Frederica, who was twenty, and Anne, who was thirty-five, were now like sisters. Anne was full of Dr. Hartwell's belief in the dignity of work, and insisted upon doing the heaviest tasks of the house. Even on a hot August day she felt that she got a certain uplift in ironing on the back porch.

Maggie had brought Anne home to herself when she said: "Dr. Hartwell and Miss Freda couldn't get along without you."

For three years now she had thought of herself as a woman who was sacrificing much comfort to do good. The thought had given her a certain primness and conventional air of philanthropy. But to-day a little Irish girl had pricked both primness and philanthropy; and as she slapped away at the fringed table napkins she admitted to herself that she was in love.

There was some exultation in the gesture when she bore the basket of ironing into the kitchen. There was a flush on her cheeks when she came out again to put up the ironing board, and she knew a delight and a satisfaction that had never dawned before.

Dr. Hartwell's step in the kitchen made her smile; she pushed the old easy-chair to a spot where there might be a little of the lake breeze coming from the east.

Digitized by Google

"Please come out and rest," she said, her voice vibrating with her new realization.

Dr. Hartwell paused on the threshold, holding the screen door open. He was tall and thin, his forehead was high; his long face, smooth-shaven, had hollows in it. Long ago Anne had decided that he was the sort of idealist who needed a practical person to look after his worldly affairs, and she had assumed that rôle without realizing what would come of it, to herself at least.

"I have met a very interesting man," he said. The word "interesting" was pronounced with hesitation. It covered the confusion, the impossibility of description with which the doctor was face to face; it was a safe word.

"But come way out," urged Anne. "You are letting the flies in!"

The aspiration which usually marked his face was dimmed by weariness; there was a line of uncertainty, of self-distrust on his lower lip. Had Anne been less exultant over her self-discovery and less joyous in finding that she was, after all, a romantic person, she would have noticed.

"What is he?" she asked.

"He is an Austrian." Dr. Hartwell paused.

"Is he out of work?"

"No, oh, no! But he is interested in that problem."

Anne gave a sign of unpleasant recognition. "I suppose he represents some charity."

"Well"—the doctor was clearly hesitant for fear of prejudicing Anne—"not exactly. He is an Austrian Socialist."

"Oh!" It was clear that Anne had no idea of finding him "interesting."

"He—I have asked him to supper."

Digitized by Google

There was a suspicion of a scowl on her forehead. "People stir you too much. You are getting thin; it must be the excitement," she said.

"It is not that Anne, it is not that!" The doctor rose and walked the length of the porch. "It is my failure." He made a gesture of finality. "I can't get the men to come to church. I can *not* get the men!"

Anne was encouraging. "Why, men never go to church. It isn't as though they had come and then stopped coming."

The doctor was not encouraged. He was a man whose temperament would have made him flagellant had he been born a Catholic; as it was, he made his own ropes for flagellation from the knowledge of his weakness. It was not enough for him that the women and children crowded his chapel. He wanted to appeal to men.

For ten years he had been on the West Side. Before that he had been one of the successful ministers in a well-to-do church, whose congregation had delighted in his emotional power, praised his rhetoric, and criticised in a lenient way his vagaries, excusing him for his impractical enthusiasm on the grounds that he was a clergyman. Some had even read his book on "Marriage and the Spiritual Law," and had pretended that they understood it.

Yet it had not been discontent with his surroundings (which, after all, he had only sensed vaguely) that had led him to resign from his position of pastoral comfort. He had thought that he heard the Macedonian cry from the other side of the Chicago River, and promptly crossing the Twelfth Street Viaduct to answer it, had found himself in the lumber-yard district. To his spiritual fancy it was a cry in all the languages of Europe. Bo-

Digitized by Google

hemian, German, Italian, Pole, Jew, and Catholic—all these he thought were needing him.

When he had recrossed the viaduct he sought out an old classmate, Alexander Sloane, a lumber dealer who was rapidly doubling his first million of dollars.

"I am going to give up my present pastorate," said the doctor.

Sloane wondered why.

"I am going over to live with the poor of the city, with the men who work for you in the lumber yards," explained the doctor.

"Good Lord!" said Sloane. "I pity you."

"Will you build a chapel if I can get my present people to use it as a mission and pay me enough to live on?"

"They won't," said Sloane, and played the prophet successfully. They didn't. In the end Sloane put up the chapel and paid the salary. The chapel was plain and roomy, the salary small. Not that the rich man was niggardly, even though he did shrug his shoulders, distrustful of the idea; but Dr. Hartwell would take only a small salary. He was enveloped in a consciousness of Christian sacrifice, and felt warm enough to defy all winds and weathers of worldly desires. That he did not realize the scantiness of the garment, and did not see that it was insufficient to cover his wife and little child, could not be laid up against him. Self-sacrifice usually strides over unwilling associates whose dependency drags them into a close relationship.

Mrs. Hartwell had not heard even the echo of the Macedonian cry. She had crossed the viaduct reluctant in spirit although at first without spoken protest. She hated the smoke, the dirty streets, the noise, the odors of industry, and close-packed humanity. She rebelled inwardly

Digitized by Google

against the disorder, the uncouth ways of West Side trade. She felt alien to the people, and could not bring herself to desire any understanding of them, any comradeship with them. Souls they might have, but to her there were racial chasms even on the soul plane.

To her own unhappiness—perhaps after all only a matter of over-refined nerves—was the terror of seeing her child of ten forced to grow up in such a neighborhood. She would have put her hands over Frederica's eyes to shut out what she felt were awful expressions of life. She would have walled her up in some room where the noise of tongues and the crashing of wagon wheels on cobblestones could not reach her. But she could do neither. Frederica entered the public school, attended Sunday school, and ran to and from the stores in the neighborhood—apparently without seeing or hearing the horrors that beat upon her mother.

Within a few weeks Mrs. Hartwell had begun to complain; she refused to believe that any Christian duty made her husband's work necessary. He could have preached over here and lived in comfort somewhere else, she thought. Nor did she see any reason why he should take the smallest salary possible for his work. The minister's problems became many in the face of his wife's growing bitterness. Frederica, young as she was, sided with her father and grew very unhappy; and it seemed dreadful to her that her mother should not appreciate her father's unselfishness.

The situation had become almost impossible for all three when Mrs. Hartwell had gone to visit relatives who sympathized with her. There, in the midst of the much-desired luxury, she had been taken sick and had died. Neither her husband nor her child had reached her in time

Digitized by Google

to see her alive, and it had seemed to Dr. Hartwell that she had planned to die rather than return to a life she hated.

To Frederica the mystery of death veiled all her memories of the petulant, spoiled mother, and gave to her a dignity which she could not have had in the child's eyes had she lived.

Frederica had been a fanciful child, and young for her age. The house was very quiet after her mother's death, and when she found that her father could give her little of his time, she turned to books and read herself into new worlds where she was not lonely. She took her friends out of the books and shared with them her life. She felt that Little Nell had left London to live with her in Chicago. She entertained Evangeline, and Rebecca out of "Ivanhoe," and when she read "Oliver Twist" she stopped early in the book so that she might "invite him over" and have a tea party where he could eat all that he wanted. It was a quaint child-play, and no one knew of it. Her father used to wonder why she talked to herself so much, but it did not worry him. He was too much occupied with his work in behalf of his Macedonian souls.

For ten years he had worked hard in this neighborhood, and had kept up hope that in the end he would have great religious results. He was always planning to bring all the men who worked in Sloane's lumber yard—and there were at least two thousand—into his chapel. He looked forward to the day when he would have to go to Sloane and tell him that he needed a bigger place—a church instead of a chapel. But for some reason this summer had been without enthusiasm or hope. He could no longer draw upon himself for confidence, and the circumstances warranted none. The men would not come to church!

Digitized by Google

Many times he and Anne had gone over this same ground, and Anne had found it impossible to cheer him. For that reason she was glad at this moment to see Frederica come into the back yard through the gate in the side fence, holding a small Flanagan by the hand; they were taking steps to the music of a hand organ on the next street. At the porch Frederica paused.

"Now, Michael Angelo Flanagan," she asked, "are yez goin' straight home?"

The boy of six nodded.

"And now, listen," she said with a serious undertone; "you are not going to gamble any more, are you?"

Michael, with newly aroused shame, looked down at shoes too large for him, and made no reply.

"You are going to grow up to be a good man, aren't you, like your father?"

"He's a policeman," piped Michael, and was off at the end of his ambiguous response, and into the rear house.

Frederica ran up the steps, threw her hat on one chair and her bundles on another, kissed her father on the top of his head, and then exclaimed in consternation:

"O Anne, I forgot the bread! You'll have to make biscuits. You see, I found Mikey gambling, and it put everything out of my head."

"Gambling!" said Anne.

"Yes, playing marbles for keeps with Tim. I stopped it; I boxed Tim's ears; he wanted all the marbles back that Mikey had won from him."

"And you let Mikey keep them?" Anne asked.

"Of course not." Frederica was condescending to Anne's density. "I took them. I acted the part of the law."

With that she went into the kitchen and came out again

Digitized by Google

with the sprinkling can. While she watered the flowers she gave the neighborhood news to Anne.

"Mrs. Rosenberg is sick in bed. I left part of the meat there. She needs good nourishing food. The doctor says her children have come too fast. I told her I'd bring the baby home with me to-morrow and keep it until she gets better. She has named it after me."

Anne laughed. "That makes ten Fredericas for this year. And how can *you* take care of a baby?"

Frederica shrugged her slight shoulders. "I don't believe in walking with them or feeding them too often. That was why the Balowskys' baby had spasms—it's better to-day."

Dr. Hartwell heard the front door bell and went in, still moody. When Freda gossiped about the women and children, it only reminded him of the unresponsive husbands and fathers. To-day it seemed that his daughter was very young for her age, and very unthinking.

Anne gave Frederica potatoes in a pan and a knife. "Pare plenty of them, because your father expects company for supper."

"Who, now?" questioned Frederica, seating herself on the lower step of the stairs which led up to the Schneiders' back porch. Whenever any of the Schneiders came down Frederica had to get up from the lower step, for the stairs were narrow; but such probable interruptions never prevented her from taking her favorite seat there in the afternoons.

"Your father has asked some Socialist—some foreigner—to come to-night. I wish he would not have such people to stay to supper."

"I hope he will ask him to wash his hands," said Frederica. "He does it so beautifully. They think it is a

Digitized by Google

kind of ceremony in the Hartwell house." She laughed at her thought.

Frederica had only begun to pare the potatoes when there was a sound of scuffling below the far end of the porch. Without stirring from the step she called out, "Adolph!"

There was a pause in the scuffle, and a voice with pretended interrogation answered, "Yes'm?"

"Let your brother alone, won't you?" She had not the smallest idea which brother it was.

"It don't hurt him none," came the expostulation.

"Adolph"—Frederica was grieved—"repeat to me what I told you yesterday."

Adolph, still invisible, declaimed with a burst of dramatic memory:

"We are a free and noble people; we believe in justice; and the American citizen fights only for his liberty, and the citizen who——"

Freda cut him short. "See that you act on that principle—the American principle, Adolph."

Quiet ensued at the end of the porch, and she was satisfied, not knowing that Adolph, fleeing from the light of American principles, had dragged Fritz into the cellar, where he sat on him until he got what he desired. Frederica was not one to recognize the place of a dark cellar in a democracy.

Anne went in to see who was calling, and left her to pare the potatoes. It was not a sensible thing to do, for Frederica was a dreamer. In a very few moments she had forgotten her task. Elbow on knee, chin in hand, she watched the storm clouds piling up in the east above the roofs of the houses which were crowded together or scattered into place as though some giant had thrown them

Digitized by Google

down by the handful. The houses varied somewhat in shape and size, but they were all one color, poverty gray; and the shingles on all the roofs were smoke-blackened. Here and there, in the distance, a dull red-brick building looked down upon these sullen homes, like a foreman on factory hands. Far off, showing above the highest roofs, there was a church spire and a factory chimney side by side, each asserting its claims to superiority.

Frederica watched the shadows of late afternoon changing colors in the dismal spaces between the houses, and she looked at the clouds through the mesh of telephone and telegraph wires which seemed to her to make a net above the city to keep human thoughts from wandering too far.

There was a lake tranquil on the other side of this confusion, and the breeze from it blew her straight, mouse-colored hair into more disorder than usual, making the outline of her head very indefinite. Although she had a will not to be broken, Frederica was not at all a decided person in appearance. She was not very tall, and she was very thin.

"Ach, ja, you should much milch trinken," Mrs. Schneider was always saying with the inflections of pity. "Ven you get nicht dicker, you vill nicht get married."

And Frederica would look meditative and say: "I wouldn't be as fat as you are, not even to have Mr. Schneider for a husband—and you know how much I think of him."

Whereupon Mrs. Schneider would say, "Ach, ja!" with a sigh of pity for her own flesh; and then, for her husband she would add: "He's a gut man, mein Adolph; but he works already too hard for to make a rich man get more money."

Digitized by Google

The conversation always stopped there out of consideration for Frederica's feelings, because the "rich man," Mr. Schneider's employer, was Alexander Sloane, whose reputation was naturally high in the Hartwell household.

All the lines in Frederica's face except those of her eyebrows, which were straight and black, had an upward tilt, so that even in repose she looked alert and gave you the impression that she was listening to something very far away. Her eyes, too—gray and changeable under the black brows—had the look of one who listens. Anne very often worried over the luminous intentness of the girl's eyes and of the black shadows under them; for frail beauty made no appeal to her; it was inconsistent with her ideas of health; it was ethereal, intangible, elusive, and so, to her, full of uncomfortable mystery. Yet to anyone else, the pallor of Frederica's face never suggested weakness and ill health. She was one of the delicately built women who can endure without breaking, although she had not yet discovered her own strength.

It was very quiet with the hush of the oncoming storm. Anne had gone in and left her alone on the back porch. The Schneider boys were no longer audible; none of the little Flanagans were crying or fighting, and whatever sounds came over from the other back yards were subdued. Frederica was not thinking of anything in particular; she was sitting in a sort of contentment and calm which belonged to her late afternoons. The pan of potatoes stood on the floor by her; the hand which held the paring knife hung motionless by her side.

She had no idea how long she had been sitting there idle when she thought she heard Anne come through the kitchen to the screen door. She turned her head to make some remark about the clouds, which she intended should

Digitized by Google

distract Anne's attention from the potatoes, but she found herself facing a stranger, a man who looked as though he had never before seen a back porch, nor a girl sitting on steps that led up to the second floor. She thought he must have been exceedingly surprised to find her staring at clouds out there, and she was surprised at him, too, for he was so "different"—she used the word "different" with the same feeling that her father had used "interesting" in describing this man to Anne.

Although she was used to strangers, for they strayed in from all sorts of bypaths, she forgot the usual formalities, and sat looking up at him. And as she did not speak, he had to.

"Dr. Hartwell asked me to wait here. He is at the present occupied with some one."

His inflections and pronunciation were foreign.

Frederica rose from the step, dropping her knife and upsetting the potatoes.

"It is cooler out here and very pleasant," she said. "I am Frederica Hartwell." She opened the door and he stepped out and stooped to pick up the potatoes.

"And I am Eugene Harden. I had not the expectation to find you so—domesticated," he said.

She laughed. "That *is* the word; but I'm not! I am quite wild yet—I forget to pare them when I have them in my hand."

He was a little confused, and she explained to him that he had made a blunder in his English.

"I have no excuse," he said, "for I have lived much in England."

"Well," she said, for she shared her father's prejudice against the English, "they *are* domesticated; but I am not English. I had an Irish grandmother and I loved her."

Digitized by Google

Harden said that he was an Austrian and that one of his grandmothers was a Hungarian; he was sure she was just as lovable as Frederica's Irish one. She leaned forward to argue.

"She may have been fascinating, but I cannot believe she was gentle, as mine was. I wish I had been a Hungarian," she added suddenly. "They dance in front of fires at night, and sleep on fir branches, and let their naked babies roll around in the dirt."

Eugene Harden caught a whiff of Hungarian memory as she spoke, and he looked at her in wonder. "Why do you live here, then?" His tone was a criticism of the place.

"Born to it, I suppose. And I like it, too," she said argumentatively, as though she thought he had no right to criticise a Chicago back yard just because she was thinking with pleasure of his grandmother's native country. "Don't you like it?" she asked. "This is our summer resort. A back porch is really a luxury over here. Besides, we have a view."

He followed her gaze to the line of house roofs against the sky and saw only the terrible squalor and sordidness. She could look close at him while he looked off, for his head was silhouetted against the wall of the house; the lines were clear and rather rugged, without any curves of tenderness. It was a massive head, set firm upon shoulders squared against attack, and belonged to an Atlas, unbent as yet by a burdening world. He roused her curiosity. She wondered where her father could possibly have met him, and she was glad he had been invited to supper.

"When the vines grow more," she said in a gentle perturbation at the necessity of saying something, "it will be very pretty out here, don't you think so?"

Digitized by Google

"If they grow close and thick enough to shut out that—" he pointed to the view she had boasted. "You should not live so close to poverty and sadness."

Frederica laughed. "But I have such a beautiful way of thinking about it." She rose and leaned against the railing. "The roofs of the houses," she said, "are the covers on caldrons full of souls. Some pass out of the caldrons—those that die; and little new souls come into them—and some day"— she spoke softly—"the spirit of God will stir them and they will live beautifully."

He leaned forward. "This is all a dream to you. You live here and do not see the ugliness?"

"I think I am awake," she said, but not as though she were absolutely certain.

A church bell, blocks away, rang the first stroke of the angelus. A deep-toned whistle, far distant, blurred with it and filled the spaces between the strokes of the bell.

Frederica turned directly to him. "This is my hour," she said. "It is so comforting to think of men coming home from work to get rested."

"You think of that?" he asked.

"Every night," she answered. "Usually I go out to walk at this time so that I can see them. It is like a procession—and I cannot tell you what it seems like to me." Then she asked impulsively: "Would you like to go with me to see it now?" She felt at once a strange eagerness to lead him into her world.

He hesitated. It was as though some forest dryad were inviting him into unknown paths. Her face was lifted toward him with the question in the eyes of a child, waiting.

"Perhaps you are not interested," she said, conscious of the pause.

Digitized by Google

" ' Je t'attendais, je veux te suivre,
Où tu m'emmeneras—j'irai.' !!

He spoke the French words almost to himself. Evidently she did not understand. He had forgotten that few Americans know any foreign language.

"I don't know even now if you are going," she said, laughing. "What did you say?"

"That it was my great desire to follow you, that where you wish to lead me, there I go."

She picked up her hat and went down the steps into the ugly yard, and through the side gate into the alley which led into Desplaines Street. He followed. The back porch was left quiet, and the potatoes were not pared when Anne came out a few moments later.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

THE HOLLOW PEDESTAL

WHILE Frederica was setting the table for supper she listened to Eugene Harden and her father, who were talking in the next room. It would have been more interesting if the Austrian had been talking about himself instead of drawing her father out, and asking questions about the men they had met upon their walk a half hour before. At the time he had said very little, and apparently had not been impressed with anything "comforting" in the sight of her procession of home-coming workers. On her return Frederica had told Anne that he had "clenched his face," and Anne had laughed at the word, although it was the expressive one.

"If he had hurled himself against something, I shouldn't have been surprised," she said. "And yet you'd think that he would not care about such things."

"Why?" asked Anne.

"He doesn't dress like most of the men who care."

Now, as she moved about the dining room, she realized that his clothes did not occupy his own mind, at any rate. He was asking about house rents, prices of meat and groceries, about schools and wages, and the average number of children, and whether the Slavic families were larger or smaller than the Teutonic. It was a regular catechism

Digitized by Google

he was putting her father through. Occasionally her father would begin to talk about the religious phases of the various peoples. Harden would listen politely, but without interest, and soon ask another question about their material welfare.

When they were seated about the table in the hot, stuffy little dining room, Dr. Hartwell took up the burden of his daily disappointment: that in all the ten years he had worked over here he had not been able to get the men to come to church.

Harden said that that was true of all workingmen all over the world. "They will not take their religion from the employing class," he said. "They will take everything else—abuse, long hours, small wages, and sentimental philanthropy—but they will not accept religion."

Dr. Hartwell was almost angry. "We have no classes in America," he said.

Harden emphasized his first statement. "You have the greatest class distinction of any country in the world. Your classes are fighting each other with greater violence than was ever shown in conflict between lord and peasant."

Frederica was stirred by the sound of what he said, although she did not believe it could be true, and she was not sorry when her father insisted upon his side of the argument that if men were good individually, each one filled with the Christian spirit, everything else would settle itself. "First, the law of love," he said, "then the laws of men."

"But you have just admitted," said Harden, "that you cannot get them to listen to your gospel. How can you fill them with the spirit, if they do not come to hear you?"

Digitized by Google

"There must be a way to get hold of them," said Dr. Hartwell, and began thereupon to tell how many ways he had already tried, without success.

The only satisfaction that Frederica could draw from this one-sided conversation was that she could study their guest's face while he was looking at her father. She had seen so many men in that place at table, for Dr. Hartwell was exceedingly hospitable. Any man who came to see him in the late afternoon was urged to stay to supper. Sometimes it was a conservative minister from uptown, whose curiosity had brought him to call. More often it was a detached person looking to the doctor for assistance in getting a job; or a home missionary who sprinkled his discussions with theological phrases. Occasionally the doctor had hailed in a workingman, whose visit encouraged him to believe that at last he was going to succeed in his attempt.

Eugene Harden was not in the least like any of these guests. Frederica was trying to describe him to herself, as she sat there paring her potato (for they had been boiled with their skins on); but she could not find any words which would make the picture. He looked foreign, and she would have said it was because of the way he held his head, as though he were looking down upon people. Her democracy discovered the idea to be fascinating. The next thing she noticed was that his hair was black, and that it curled wherever he had let it grow long enough to have its own way. All the lines of his face were straight; even his nostrils and his lips had angles and no curves. His skin was clear and dark, and had a sort of glisten to it that she had never seen before.

As she stared he looked toward her suddenly with the question: "Do you think with your father?" And she

Digitized by Google

was so far outside the conversation that she was startled and did not know what to say. He smiled, and she knew that he had been conscious of her gaze.

"Frederica has a very remarkable grasp of these questions," said Dr. Hartwell with pride. By that time she had at least clutched the probable subject of conversation, and began to look intelligent through her heightened color.

"Yes," she said, "this is a wonderful place to live in. I would not want to live on any of the avenues, or just where there were only Americans."

Harden leaned toward Frederica. "You like foreigners?" There was something very personal in his movement and in his voice, which could not have escaped Anne, who had, however, just gone out to the ice box. Frederica knew that what he said was: "After studying me all this time, do you like me?"

But she said "Yes," without embarrassment.

He reached his hand across and put it on hers, which lay on the edge of the table. "I am very glad," he said.

Anne came in with the blackberries, and saw him withdrawing his hand from Frederica's, and then Frederica was relieved that her father was going on with his description of the motley mass of humanity in whose midst they were living. No hand had ever felt like the one which had just closed over hers; she would never have believed that any hand had so much sympathy—no, it was more than sympathy—so much intimacy in it. She fancied she could still feel his fingers. Covertly she watched his hands now instead of his face; they were not unusual, they were close-knit, moderately large, and darker-skinned than his face. In spite of the conventional white cuffs and the carefully kept nails, they were savage hands. It may

Digitized by Google

have been the fine black hair on them which made them seem so; her father's were as smooth as a woman's, and she had never noticed any other man's.

When Anne spoke to her about the call they ought to make on the Balowskys after supper, she came back to her surroundings and began to tell anecdotes of the neighborhood. The realities of her life were almost hidden by a sense of humor which hung about her like a bright veil. It was usual for her, whenever she went out to the store or to a neighbor's, to come back with a tripping bit of narrative which, until she met it, had plodded along as some unprepossessing fact of stern existence.

Harden sat listening to her, in apparent surprise that she was not sentimental in her attitude toward these people of another class. He did not know that her Sunday-school class was likely to break out with laughter when she pointed a moral, nor that the Mother's Wednesday Afternoon Prayer Meeting was the social event of the week for most of the women who came, because of the pleasure experienced in telling Frederica all the news—of the youngest O'Flaherty in the kindergarten, and of the expected promotion of Mrs. Rosen's husband. Gossip she heard, too, but none that was malicious; that never rose to the surface when her quick eyes peered into the depths of neighborhood experience. In some strange way she was her own protection from unpleasant reality, although not consciously shirking it. Her father went along ponderously spading up the garden of men in hopes of a harvest, while she followed after with a small trowel and turned up things which lived just below the surface, delighting in what she found, but without any serious care for the future.

Digitized by Google

Anne, who had watched her often just as she was watching her now, wondered always what any quiet mood of hers betokened, for the child, gay and whimsical, which was living on in Frederica was, after all, what Anne loved best. It may have been that she dreaded seeing the girl become a full-grown woman with the humdrum woman's problems, or it may have been that she resented a little the idea that Dr. Hartwell should have a grown-up daughter.

To-night Anne was particularly stirred by the presence of a guest, and when she saw the doctor's face brighten with its old enthusiasm, she began to lose her instinctive distrust of the "foreigner." She asked Eugene Harden why he was so much interested in the things they were discussing. Harden hesitated a moment, as though to adjust his answer to their understanding. Frederica recognized the pause as a sign of a bigger experience; she felt it to show that he thought them all children, and it put her on the defensive. She moved toward her father as though to take sides with him against this newcomer, who had perhaps only been drawing them out in order to discover their limitations.

"I am a fighter," he said, "and I have come to this country because it is here that there will be the first great conflict."

Dr. Hartwell moved his glass of water to one side in a meditative way.

"You may be right. I had not thought of it as a conflict—as battle," he said. "I shall find a text for that next Sunday." He seemed already to be working out the sermon in his mind, moving his spoons and dishes as he always did when he began to arrange paragraphs on a page.

Digitized by Google

Harden interrupted him. "Are you free—to choose such subjects for sermons?" he asked.

Dr. Hartwell showed surprise. "Free? Why, in America, my friend, we are all free—free to say or do just what we please."

"That is, within the law?" questioned the Austrian.

"Certainly, certainly," answered the older man; "but the law is with us a humble servant. We never think of the law, do we, Frederica?"

"I never have," she said.

Anne asked him if, in Austria, he thought very much about law.

"It is like a cage," he answered. "At first you are used to seeing the outside world streaked with the crossing of its bars, but after a while it becomes intolerable, and you have to get out—get away—come over here."

"You should destroy it," said Frederica, "for it will make men like monkeys to live in it."

"But when monkeys become men the cage will itself dissolve into air," he said. "It's only when you can no longer live with monkeys that you desire to leave—to come where men are men." His enthusiasm for America showed in his manner.

Anne said she thought a man's first duty was to his home, to his associates; she insisted in a polite way that he had no right to be in America if conditions were so bad in Austria.

But Frederica leaned on the table and replied to her directly that she was glad he had come; that if they would all leave Europe—but her logic failed her and she turned to Harden. "Are you going to live in this country?"

"If I succeed," he answered; and then he spoke of his intention to speak to all the unions in the city in behalf

Digitized by Google

of that eight-hour day which was to be demanded by all workingmen throughout the world of industry.

After he had explained, Frederica was not very clear in her mind. She was used to the idea of great masses of men going each morning to work and coming home again at night. She knew that they had trouble with their bosses, and were always complaining of their wages and their hours; but she had heard the complaints just as she heard fault-findings with the weather and with the behavior of children. The conditions were as uncertain as the weather, and to her mind quite as inevitable.

And here was a man who spoke of changing the conditions, and so speedily that within a few months hundreds of thousands of men would on the same day, May-day, stand together on one issue and force a standard day of eight hours upon the whole system.

"The romance of it catches you," he said to her.

"Romance?" said Anne, who was paying more attention to Dr. Hartwell's interest in this stranger than she was to the discussion.

"In every age," said Harden, "the romance is always in the greatest conflict. There was the struggle for religious freedom in one age, the struggle for political freedom in the next, which was in the last century. To-day we struggle for industrial freedom."

"And you mean to be a general?" said Frederica, who kept bringing the conversation back to a personal basis.

"No,"—he had taken her remark quite seriously—"I am one of the adventurers who came into the fight for the sake of the excitement."

"Why are you on the side of the working people?" asked Anne, who insisted upon her right to suspect him of "motives."

Digitized by Google

He seemed to give her reason for suspicion, for he shrugged his shoulders in foreign fashion. "There is more excitement on that side," he said. "More of the romance," and he looked at Frederica for acquiescence.

But she was staring at her saucer in disappointment. Some way she had been making a hero of him, had been picturing him as the high-souled champion of an uncertain and unpopular cause, and he had not only stepped down from his pedestal, but kicked it, to show what a hollow one she had given him. She felt that she had the right to demand a noble motive from him, for she had been brought up by her father to demand that of everyone. When she looked up, conscious of his gaze, she found it amused and far from serious.

"Yes," he said, "I am an adventurer. Every age must have a few men who risk their lives for the pleasure of it—but to-day one can only risk one's money, which is, though, far more than life."

Dr. Hartwell pushed his chair back from the table and crossed one leg over the other. Frederica recognized the beginning of a long dissertation and, for the first time in her life, was displeased at the idea. It was because she knew what he would say, and she wanted to hear Eugene Harden.

Her father spoke of his desire to give the men a contented spirit and so prepare them for peace, not for conflict. "The brotherhood of man is what we must preach," he said.

"But many of the brothers have got to fight for their share of the inheritance. 'The meek shall only inherit the earth' if their meekness covers craft and cunning."

The door bell rang just then and Freda had to go. Anne was glad of the interruption, because she saw the

Digitized by Google

flush of enthusiasm leaving Dr. Hartwell's face, and she felt that he had been led to the top of a hill only to be shown the misery in the valley on the other side. Besides, the conversation was becoming too abstract, too much in the air for her. It always irritated her when Dr. Hartwell discussed heaven, even, as a "state of being." She was, to be sure, spiritual in a practical way; but had she been closely questioned she would have had to admit that in her heaven—if she were to look forward to it with comfort—the mansions must be numbered, the golden streets named, and the city hall properly ventilated. Heaven was a definite municipal ideal. Chicago was its antithesis, and there was nothing mysterious nor abstract in the conditions of Chicago.

Frederica came back with Alec Sloane, the son of the man whose philanthropy had made Dr. Hartwell's work possible. Alec was like one of the family; he was five years older than Frederica, had spent most of the time since he had graduated from college the year before in trying to learn his father's business and in sitting around the Hartwell house. He was broad-shouldered and blond, and given to theories. Freda had said that he always had theories to insert in vacancies where there should have been facts. She had said, too, one time in a sort of exasperation, that whenever he found he could not climb a tree for the fruit he tried to shake the fruit down. She meant him to see that she preferred men whose muscles allowed them to climb. But he was not moved by her figures of speech, nor by her occasional show of temper. He expected to marry her one of these days, and then she would like his perfectly safe way of shaking fruit into her lap, instead of endangering his life and limb by climbing.

Digitized by Google

To-night when he came into the room he stared at Harden. This was not the sort of man he was used to seeing at the Hartwells' table. He recognized what the others had not, that Harden was "a man of the world," that mysterious and sophisticated being who is regarded by simple people as a "dangerous person," by others as the highest accomplishment of civilization. Alec was glad that he had come dressed in a way which showed *his* knowledge of etiquette and fashion. He was glad, too, on the Hartwells' account that he had dropped in, for it would give this stranger a better idea of them that they had such callers. The house itself, and the simplicity of the three people was not likely to give the right impression, he thought.

He told them, when he had been introduced, that he had come in from his father's place on the north shore to see if they would not come out for a week. He brought his father's and mother's invitation to all three, and as he gave it to them, he alluded to the leisure and luxury which was to be at their service. He wanted to make their guest aware that although they lived in this place, they had friends who could afford to give them an agreeable visit.

"You ought to get out of this heat," he said.

"Let's go out on the back porch," answered Freda.

They laughed at her quick response, but she said that there was a breeze from the lake out there, and they left the table. Alec asked her as they went out who the man was and where her father had met him.

"I don't know," she said, and her answer was truthful; but it gave a sense of false security to Alec, who took it for indifference instead of confusion of mind. He sat down beside her on the stairs and showed quite an unusual

Digitized by Google

interest in everything she said, was almost affectionate in his replies. But Frederica was trying to listen to Harden and her father, and did not notice this new attitude of his. Anne did, however, and began to plan for the acceptance of Alec's invitation. After all, Frederica was not the sort of girl to continue living in such surroundings as these, and the doctor needed only one woman to help him in his work. She felt quite generous as she meditated in the dark of the porch.

Harden had asked all the questions possible, it seemed to Frederica, and had told nothing of himself. He had learned that the doctor's chapel was in the center of an industrial district, large and polyglot; that there were factories and mills close about them; that not far away were Mr. Sloane's lumber yards, where two thousand men were employed the year round. Alec had given him the details of the business with the usual American pride in its success, and Harden had asked him, too, about wages and hours and many commonplace things. Under every word she heard his voice, a full, rich voice with leisure in it and a quiet sort of assertiveness. Occasionally he paused for the right word, and she would give it to him. Finally he rose and stood near her, looking across at the houses which still showed gray-walled and black-roofed in the moonlight. The mysterious silhouette beyond was like a jagged wall.

"I have now seen the secret places of your country," he said. "Of all this"—he swept the confused picture with his hand—"we hear nothing in Europe."

They all looked out at the scene with a sense of never having looked at it before.

"I did not believe that democracy would permit this," he said.

Digitized by Google

"We shall always have poverty," replied the doctor, "and it has its compensations. Alec here will tell you how much it has meant to his father to give of his wealth to these poorer brothers."

"Who produce the wealth?" Harden spoke very quietly and looked at Frederica. "If you could choose," he said, "would you give charity to these people or help them to change conditions so that there would be no need of charity?"

She looked up at him through the dim light. "Why, change things," she said, "only of course you can't. I suppose if I had to choose between praying in that alley with Bunyan or trying to tear down those ramshackle fences with Don Quixote, I'd take the excitement—I love to change things—even furniture in a room." And then she realized what she had said.

"You are an adventurer, too," he said.

"Oh, no," she replied quickly.

"You will ride a white horse and wear silver armor for the sake of the romance."

"That would be dreadful," she said, and he laughed down at her.

Alec rose to go. He went over to where Anne and the doctor were sitting, and urged them to come out the next day. He would sleep in the town house that night and call for them in time to get the noon train. He repeated all that he had said when he first came in, standing irresolute between his desire to get back to fresher air and his newly awakened jealousy; for he heard Frederica and Harden talking as they leaned over the flower boxes and looked into the moonlit chaos of houses and back fences. He turned, with a sense of diplomacy, and spoke to the Austrian.

Digitized by Google

"We should like to have you come out and see us," he said.

Harden thanked him. "I am to spend a week with the Gilfeathers out there in September. Perhaps I can see you then."

Anne was surprised, for the Gilfeathers were the wealthiest people in Lake Woods, and not likely to listen to any such conversation as she had been bored by during the last two hours. Then she smiled to herself at her own density.

"Miss Marian is just come from Europe, isn't she?"

"I do not know," he said. "I have only met Mr. Gilfeather at the club. He has the greatest factory of its kind in the world. He is most interesting." He shook hands with her and with Dr. Hartwell, and then went back to where Freda still stood looking at the Flanagans' house, which was in the shadow of their own and so unlit by the moon. "You have promised," he said, as he took her hand.

Alec and he went out into the close hot street together and crossed the viaduct to the cooler district which lay close to the lake.

Dr. Hartwell went into his study to read the evening paper, Anne and Freda went to wash the supper dishes; they were both rather quiet. Freda was going over in her mind the impressions she had received since the Austrian had appeared at the screen door. There was a most joyous sense of adventure within her. She lifted the cups and saucers with a careful precision, as though she were keeping time to the music which was swinging through her thoughts. Anne interrupted her by asking what she would take with her to wear at the Sloanes'.

Digitized by Google

Freda stopped short on her way to the kitchen. "Oh, I don't want to go," she said.

Anne looked at her in amazement. "Frederica Hartwell, this very morning you were wishing they would ask us to come out there!"

"I know—but"—she hesitated; she could not admit that the city had suddenly become intensely interesting to her because of a newcomer therein.

Anne heard the unspoken words. "What did you promise Mr. Harden?" she asked.

Frederica was mistakenly filling the dish pan with cold water instead of hot. "I promised him that I would show him the beautiful things over here. He wants to meet some of my friends, and visit my 'Mothers' Meeting.'"

That was not sufficient reason to Anne's mind that Freda should spend the hot August days in town. "You can show him those things later."

"We are going walking to-morrow," said Frederica.

"But he heard the invitation Alec gave you."

Frederica admitted that. "I suppose," she added, "that he is not going to be here very long."

Anne spoke sharply. "He told your father that he might make Chicago his home."

"Did he?" Frederica's pleasure was evident. She caught Anne's look and colored.

"Alec came in on purpose," said Anne. "He will be very much disappointed. You *must* go."

"I am not going," said Frederica. "I think it would be very selfish to go off to a cool place, when the people over here have to stay and endure the heat."

"There is another reason, too, why you should go," said Anne—and then paused before she added: "Alec

Digitized by Google

wants you to. I think, Freda, that he wants to—to propose to you."

Frederica leaned up against the wall. There was no reason why she should be so shaken by Anne's words, for she had known that they all thought of her as Alec's sweetheart—his father and her father, too. But it had never been put so clearly before. Certainly never by Alec himself, nor by her even in her own mind, and now Anne used the word "propose," and was urging her to go out to his home so that he *could* propose. If she had had any difficulty in getting a good excuse to stay in town she had a real one now.

It is to girls like Frederica who have grown up in the companionship of men that the idea of love and marriage comes as the greatest surprise. The girl in a convent who dreams of lovers is not nearly so shy as the one who has had boys for playmates, who has thought of them only as fellow-beings. Frederica's face burned; she looked frightened, and, moreover, rebellious. Anne began to wish that she had not put it so baldly; she tried to laugh it off.

"You queer girl," she said, "you know Alec is in love with you. And think what it would mean if you would marry him! Think how much good you could do over here —how you could help your father!"

Before she had finished her sentence, Frederica had rushed out on the back porch and sat down in the old easy-chair. Anne followed her and found her in tear

"I won't go!" said Frederica.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

DR. HARTWELL'S STUDY

DR. HARTWELL'S study was full of books, and to-day there were several bowls of asters, Frederica's favorite flower, which she had arranged with the idea of brightening up the day for her father, who had been much depressed by her refusal to make the visit to the Sloanes.

Anne had not urged the matter when she realized that Freda was unhappy at the idea of going. And she had told Dr. Hartwell of Freda's tears. That was what had depressed him. He had really hoped for her marriage with Alec—but if she cried when it was mentioned! He noticed, too, that when Alec came for them in a carriage —which they had not expected him to do—Freda was not at home. She came in afterwards and said that she had been over to Mrs. Rosen's to get the asters. She was still stirred by the new idea that she was to be confronted by a proposal, and in her shyness she had gone to the Rosens' before eleven and stayed there until after the noon whistle had blown.

For three hours now she had been restless and variable. Yet whenever she thought of the danger she had avoided she took a long breath. Her father had not said any-

Digitized by Google

thing to her about Alec, but she felt his distressful eyes upon her. And to distract him after their midday dinner she had suggested that they write the sermon for Sunday.

"No, Frederica," said Dr. Hartwell, "I am not in a mood to write a sermon."

So she went into her room and tried to make her hair smooth, drawing it back far too tight on her head, until her face, without any soft lines about it, looked sharp and elfish. She dropped her comb when the door bell rang. She heard Anne go to the door, and then Eugene Harden's voice. In a moment she had forgotten her appearance and her fear that he would not come because it was raining, and she went into the study.

He spoke to her with the ease of manner which made him seem an old friend. His gray clothes, the gray tie with the pearl in it, made his black hair and dark skin even more noticeable. The men she knew had no such feeling for color; they wore indistinguishable browns and blues and duller grays; and her father's black suits were always dingy even when new.

"You did not go to the country?" he said, as he took her hand.

"Of course not," she answered, looking up at him. "I had promised to go with you."

"But I thought that perhaps your father and Miss—Miss——"

"Forester," said Frederica.

"I thought they might wish you to—and they are older friends than I." He spoke very directly.

"But I had promised you," she replied, and she knew as she said it that she was telling him two things—first that she kept her promises, and second that she was in-

Digitized by Google

dependent and could keep her promises in spite of Anne and her father. Now that he had his answer and knew that she was in the hot, smelly city on his account, he told her she ought to have gone to the country.

"It must have disappointed Mr. Sloane."

"I—I didn't see him when he came," she said.

Her father found the occasion to his need. "He was very much disappointed, Frederica," he said, and looked at her significantly.

It was raining too hard now to go out. Frederica sat down near the window. Dr. Hartwell leaned back in his desk chair and began to question Harden.

"I am a very practical man," he said, "and whenever a new idea comes to me I must make some use of it. You talked yesterday of the army of industry—I am going to write a sermon on that—to the men." He turned to the big Bible on the end of the long study table and opened it. While he was seeking his place Harden turned to Frederica:

"Think how green the fields are under the rain—think of the beauty you are missing."

"But I like it here," she said, and looked around at the bowls of asters, one high up on a book-shelf, one on the table, and another on her father's desk.

In reality Frederica did not miss the country. She found her hours of beauty every day in the city. At the close of a hot day, when the sun at the end of the street changed into golden mist the dust rising from the day's traffic and lit up the windows of the houses, she held her breath in enjoyment of it. Moonlight falling on the one tree before the house, or on the flower boxes on the back porch, was full of subtle promise to her; and on rainy days when the smoke from factory chimneys swung low

Digitized by Google

over house roofs, she thought she lived in the gods' twilight. She resented his lack of feeling for it.

"If you don't like the city why do *you* stay in it?" she asked.

"I might not like a camp of war," he answered, "but if I am to fight I have to stay in it. You can live peacefully outside."

She wondered if he, too, knew Alec's intention, and she colored—to the tips of her ears.

Dr. Hartwell had the place he was looking for. "I have found my text," he said, and quoted in his "Bible" voice, as Freda called it: "'When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also, on every side of the camp—and say: the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.'"

Frederica caught the question in Eugene's face. "Perhaps Mr. Harden does not know that story of Gideon," she said to her father.

Harden laughed. "I have forgotten Gideon—if I ever knew him."

"Put the story in one sentence, Frederica," said Dr. Hartwell. That was his test of her knowledge always. A story had to be well known to be put that way.

She looked at the Austrian meditatively and said: "Gideon won his battle for Israel against their enemies, the Midianites, by making a great noise around their camp——"

"You have forgotten the main point," said her father.

"I know I have," said Frederica. "Now listen—this is better: When Gideon and his chosen three hundred made a great noise about the camp of their enemies, the

Digitized by Google

Midianites, the Midianites in confusion and fright killed each other, and the victory was for Israel." Then she looked at her father. "But it's a question, after all," she said, "whether the noise Gideon made is the most important point, or the Midianites killing each other."

Dr. Hartwell said it was the enemy destroying themselves which seemed most providential.

"But it was the noise of trumpets and breaking pitchers that made them," insisted Freda.

Harden was evidently amused at the discussion. "In your sermon," he said, "call first for noise, and at the end prophesy the destruction of the enemy."

Suddenly he rose and took a chair nearer to Dr. Hartwell. "I should like to have your help," he said. "We will make the noise and win a peaceful victory. Apply the principles of American democracy to American business; rouse the desire for justice in the great masses of your people, and then we shall have a world victory for labor."

Dr. Hartwell's face reflected Harden's ardor. "I will begin on Sunday." He turned to Freda. "We must advertise this sermon," he said. "I think I shall have some handbills printed with the text on them."

"And at the top," said Harden, "put these words: 'You have nothing to lose but your chains, you have a world to win.'"

Dr. Hartwell turned about to his desk to write the words. "But at the very top of the page," he said, "I shall put, 'To the Men of the Bethesda Chapel'——"

"Why not put it 'To the Workingmen of the West Side'—you will get outsiders, then," suggested Harden.

"Good," said Dr. Hartwell.

Frederica did not guess that her father was being in-

Digitized by Google

fluenced by this stranger even more than herself. She only knew that she had never before seen him flushed with so great an enthusiasm. It occurred to her that he, too, might be an adventurer in this new conflict, and that gave her a sense of her own excitement being justified. While the two men talked she sat on the edge of her chair, elbow on knee, chin in hand—her characteristic attitude of attention.

Harden was describing the effect his walk on Halsted Street had made on him. Dr. Hartwell listened because Halsted Street was part of his world, to which he had become so accustomed that he no longer thought of how it looked; for him it was only the street where Mrs. Rosen lived over the "corn and feed" store, where the Balowskys, for the sake of the revenue, kept five men boarders in the four rooms with their family of six children, and where the problems of other parishioners needed his constant attention. Dr. Hartwell admitted, however, that the paving was a disgrace to any city, and that the houses needed painting.

"Never have I seen such color for the allegory of despair," said Harden. "Grays and browns and red without cheerfulness. And trade, confused, in disorder; the shops thrust the smell of decayed vegetables, cheese, and reeking sausages into my nostrils. I saw a shoemaker mending the shoes of the poor; a woman with strong red arms cutting off portions of meat for the stomachs of the poor; an old man who carried a heavy basket of coal. He was the symbol of the old age of to-day; soot and grime stained his beard and streaked down from his bleared eyes. There were like specimens, mounted, to attract attention to the whole exhibit."

Dr. Hartwell began to resent this description. "Yes,

Digitized by Google

yes," he said, "it is sad; but when the spirit of brotherhood, of love, penetrates them, it will all be changed."

Anne came to the door with a note in her hand. "Alec has written to me that if you will change your mind about going he will call for us in time to get the six o'clock train. He did not go at noon. The boy is waiting for an answer."

"Tell him that we will be very glad to go." Dr. Hartwell gave his daughter no time to reply. Anne left the room quickly to avoid any discussion, and to send the answer before it was recalled.

"Oh, father!" said Frederica, her cheeks flaming; but he had risen and gone to the door. "Tell the boy, Anne, that we will go on the street cars," he called, not caring to make it more embarrassing for Frederica by making the start as Alec's guest.

The Austrian rose, and while her father's back was turned, took one of the asters from the bowl without comment. He put it in his pocket, and Frederica said nothing, for there did not seem to be anything to say; but she could not have looked more surprised if he had taken a picture off the wall.

"May I call upon you at Mr. Sloane's?" he said to Anne who had appeared with an air of complaisant triumph. "Mr. Gilfeather has asked me to go out with him to-night."

"I think Mr. Sloane will be very glad to have you call," answered Anne.

And to Frederica he said, laughing, "*Je veux te suivre.*"

Anne understood him and drew herself up, but he did not seem to notice her at all as he put on his gray gloves.

Digitized by Google

"Gloves in August!" thought Anne. To her mind it certified him as dangerous.

Frederica felt her heart rise with joy, and her knees trembled. The moment he was out of the door she ran to her room and began packing in the hope that Anne would leave her to herself. And Anne, not knowing what she could possibly say now, did.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

MRS. SLOANE was a woman who cared little for society, who had no desire to make any show of her wealth; who would have been quite as contented if her husband had had a small salary —would perhaps have been happier, because she demanded for her happiness his companionship; and his business made it impossible for her to have that. Of late he had been more than usually abstracted, and even at home was somewhere else in thought.

She and Anne Forester had become very warm friends through their common admiration for Dr. Hartwell. Frederica she liked very well, but could not understand.

There was no entertaining. Mrs. Sloane took it for granted that they wanted to rest, to sit on the beach which belonged to the grounds, to read under the trees, and to have tea on the wide piazza which overlooked the lake.

Anne and Dr. Hartwell found the quiet and the luxury ideal—not that he was conscious how much he was enjoying it, for he talked more than ever of his plans for work and what must be done in the neighborhood where he lived.

Mrs. Sloane, who was a religious woman, felt very grateful that her husband's wealth was being used for

Digitized by Google

such a noble purpose; and she talked to Dr. Hartwell about the church which he hoped to need. And his belief in himself was strengthened by her great interest. It meant more to him in a way than Anne's, because Mrs. Sloane was an outsider, and he felt with her that increase of dignity which comes only when one is interesting outsiders in his work. Encouragements and harmony in the home are very essential, but they are not stimulating.

Anne Forester listened to many of these conversations between the two, and followed her own thoughts. She had a plan which she had been wanting to carry out for some time, but she had not yet broached it to Dr. Hartwell. It had to do with her own wealth, which was by no means to be disregarded in the list of fortunes. The surprising thing was that her father was not generally known to be very wealthy. Anne knew, and had become in heart a sort of miser, saving her income and watching the interest on her capital with anxious eyes. She meant to build that church herself. But she did not want to build it until she was sure that it was needed. Dr. Hartwell never appealed to her for funds to carry on any of his work. From the moment she came into his house he seemed to have forgotten that she came from a home of wealth, and nothing in her behavior was likely to recall it in his mind.

It was natural for Alec Sloane to devote himself to Frederica's comfort. His first thought in the morning was the plan for her day. At first she avoided him on the pretense that she was tired; but when she saw that he was behaving just as usual, and apparently not watching for an opportunity to talk of marriage, she became less nervous. They went boating and walking and driving, and their companionship seemed as natural and easy as it always had been.

Digitized by Google

Frederica was not conscious that this natural and easy companionship was a great strain upon Alec, and that he spent many hours while she was there on her visit in walking about the near woods, trying to make up his mind to speak very definitely to her; to ask her to marry him. But he never could quite reach that decision, because he always recalled that little air of reserve on her part, which was more chilling to his ardor when he was with her than any absolute coldness or conscious disapproval of him would have been. Without knowing it, she made him very careful to be always the companion and never the lover.

There was one day of her visit when he was almost desperate in his resolve to come to her directly and get a "yes" or "no." It was a day when Frederica was expecting Harden; had dressed for him, and sat with her eyes on a book which she was not reading. And he knew what was in her thoughts, and felt quite sure that she was much disappointed when the Austrian did not come. He sat on the piazza watching her, not daring to interrupt even her pretense of reading, when Anne came out of the house.

Alec jumped to his feet. "Are you going for a walk?" he said.

Anne had not intended to, but something in his voice made her change her mind.

"Yes," she said, "I would like very much to go, if you will go with me. And Frederica," she added, "you have had absolutely no exercise to-day."

But Frederica excused herself because she was tired, and Alec was rather glad. He wanted to talk to Anne, and he was even willing to risk Eugene Harden's call in his absence.

Digitized by Google

However, it was not so easy to talk to Anne after they had gotten started. He talked of everything else that he could think of, and it was she who brought the conversation back to Frederica.

"Just this one week out here in the country makes her look like a different person," she said.

"She ought to stay," said Alec.

"Yes," said Anne. "I don't think the city is the place for Frederica to live—particularly where we are."

Alec stopped and turned directly to Anne. "You know perfectly well, Miss Forester," he said, "what I want."

Anne did not make it too easy for him by admitting that she knew, for she was anxious that he should put it into words for her, so that she could be an open assistant in bringing Frederica to her senses.

He continued: "I would like to keep her here now. I do not see any reason why we should not get married, if she cares for me."

That was not the easiest thing for Anne to answer. But she exaggerated her own wish into an opinion. "She does care for you, Alec. It is only that she has never thought about marriage and about love."

"Do you think I ought to ask her?" said Alec.

Anne hesitated. "Alec, I think," she said, "I would just take things for granted. If you make up your mind that she is going to care for you, if you will just study her, you will find the right time to speak to her. But I wouldn't this week, Alec."

And so it was that Alec went back and kept his secret to himself; did everything that he could to make Frederica at home and easy; and she never guessed that Anne had become his accomplice.

Digitized by Google

But Frederica's first thought every morning was whether Eugene Harden would call. She did not know that the town of Lake Woods was being much stirred by his visit. It even enjoyed his "altruism," as his interest in industrial problems was called, for he was found to be capable of persiflage; and when he was intense they said he had "temperament." His apparent indifference to women won them, and they were likely to interrupt his conversations with their husbands and fathers, and draw him from the discussion of modern capitalism to something more feminine and personal.

However, in these discussions, he was listened to with respect, because he appeared to be a gentleman of leisure. Nor was any great pitch of excitement ever reached, even when his views were violently opposed to those of his host, for it was felt that his position was natural, justifiable in Austria or Kamchatka or anywhere else than in America; and it would have been quite as foolish to take issue with him. There was, however, a clashing of intellectual cymbals before him, and once in a while they wandered into the Utopia of industrial freedom which he pictured, and found it a very pleasant place.

Marian Gilfeather, the daughter who had just come back from Europe, prided herself on her knowledge of men, and used to boast that they never could escape from the categories in which she placed them. But she was a little puzzled by Eugene Harden. "You can predict nothing of his morality," she said, "from his manner; for he laughs at everything—yet in quite an impersonal way."

She enjoyed this inability of hers to judge him, for it lent the charm of adventure to all of their conversations, even when she found that she could not bring him into the paths of personality, but had to remain in the

Digitized by Google

highroad, the public highroad of convention, of the commonplace.

She rather liked, too, the current impression that he was her guest instead of her father's, for to her mind he was in every respect a distinguished man. He was quite as straightforward as any American man that she knew, and yet he had all that charm of unknown background, of mysterious European civilization, to enhance his qualities of mind and manner. He had admitted once when questioned that his name had a *von* before it. And his democracy in not using the title to which it entitled him was favorably commented on, particularly by the men. Besides, unlike most of the foreigners who were the guests of Lake Woods' best families, he seemed to have money, and spent it with excellent taste, so that at the end of a week his several hosts were really indebted to him instead of the other way around. Probably this independence of his made him more popular with the men than anything in his personality or principles.

On the third day of his visit Miss Gilfeather said that she was going to take him driving. She was planning that they should take the most romantic drive in Lake Woods; and when they started out she purposely let the conversation languish in order that he should feel how completely responsive she was to the beauties of nature; for she had noticed that he was much affected by trees and all the other paraphernalia of natural scenery. After the pause had become almost intense he turned to her. She waited eagerly to see what question would spring from the past few moments' silence.

"Do you know," he said, "where the Sloanes live?"

Marian Gilfeather urged the horse on. "Yes," she said, "we have just passed the house."

Digitized by Google

"I thought so," he replied. "I fancied I saw Miss Hartwell on the piazza. I should like very much to call there if it might be convenient when you return. I imagine you are all informal enough to permit of such a call under these circumstances."

"Who is Miss Hartwell?" asked Marian.

"She is Dr. Hartwell's daughter," said Eugene.

"Oh," said Marian, and after a pause, "I know Mrs. Sloane, and I know Alec, and I believe they did say that he was engaged to Dr. Somebody's daughter. Perhaps she's the one."

"Perhaps," said Eugene, and when they came back he did not suggest stopping at the Sloanes; and she had no intention of recalling his wish to his mind; for by that time she looked upon any woman of whatever age, color, or condition as a possible, even though a vague, rival. Indeed, she went so far as to take another road which did not pass the Sloanes' house; and she took great pains to keep the conversation going at full tilt, chatting like a magpie upon all the kings of Europe, upon the fashions of Vienna, upon whatever seemed farthest removed from Lake Woods and Lake Woods' visitors.

"Do you know," she said, "I think I have met a brother of yours, an Austrian officer, although I can't be quite sure. I am going to look up one of my dancing programmes. His first name was Felix."

"I have a brother Felix," said Eugene, "who is an officer in the Austrian army."

"I think there is some resemblance," she said. "You reminded me of some one the first time I saw you. Your brother is married, isn't he?"

"Yes," said Eugene, and something in his manner forbade her to question him further.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

MAGGIE'S INFLUENCE

MAGGIE FLANAGAN was on her way out of church when she noticed the "good-looking Bohemian," as she had dubbed him. He was watching her, and when she went down the flight of steps he followed and spoke to her. Maggie did not know that the tremor she felt was like that felt by another Margaret who was spoken to on the church steps, and so when she tossed her head and said, "I don't know you," she was not conscious of the significance of the look he gave her. She had never read "Faust."

"But I know you," he said. "You're Maggie Flanagan, and you work at the Fair Store."

Maggie paused. "And my father's Irish and a policeman on this beat," she said.

"Yes, and he lets me talk to him."

Gustav Lange fell into step with her, and she took this last statement as sufficient reason for dropping barriers of convention. They walked down Twelfth Street. Maggie was dressed in her best dress, and was capable of pride that Lange had well-blackened shoes and walked with a swagger that drew people's attention. She avoided going directly home because she did not want him to know that she lived in a rear house.

"Where do you work?" she asked.

Digitized by Google

"Out of a job—trying to get a place in the lumber yards," he said, "but you need a word from somebody when you're new in a town like this."

There was a certain elegance in his speech, to Maggie's ears, and she was proud that he should be walking with her. "Perhaps I can get somebody to say the word," she said with a hint of boastfulness.

"You?" He pretended surprise. In fact he was surprised that she was so quick to answer to his desires.

"I know an awful good friend of Mr. Sloane," she said.

"Do you know him well?"

"My, yes, I should say so. We live—next door to them."

It was agreed, then, before they had walked six blocks that she was to introduce him to Dr. Hartwell and say she had known him a long time. Maggie did not hesitate before the idea of making such a statement.

"It does seem as if I had," she said. She knew that when she got home she would be scolded for not coming directly from church, and yet she loitered, not knowing how to get rid of him before turning into her own street. She stopped at the corner and looked down at her prayer book. "I must hurry," she said.

"I'll go with you," said Lange.

"I'd rather you shouldn't. Ma doesn't like my having fellows."

"She must spend most of her time 'not liking,' then."

Maggie was pleased with the compliment. "When can I see that man who lives next door?" asked Lange.

"I'll get a recommend—in writing," said Maggie, distressed at her predicament.

"No, I want to see him," said Lange.

"Well, we don't live next door. I was codding you. We live behind them—in their back yard." She felt

Digitized by Google

romance crumbling. He would never walk with her again after that admission.

"That's next door, only in a different direction. I knew where you lived," he said.

Maggie's eyes shone with gratitude and she laughed. "I was walking the wrong way so's you wouldn't find it out, and you knew," she said.

"I thought you wanted the air," he answered. "Let's go to the park. It's too hot to go in."

Maggie gave one quick thought to the waiting work and the Sunday dinner she ought to be getting, and went with him.

The people who met them in the park noticed them because the man looked of another class from the girl. Anyone who had cared to look closer would have seen that he was trying to appear a workingman and was not very successful.

"I must get home before dark," said Maggie, while they were sitting on a bench after a lunch at a cheap restaurant. She would not let her mind rest upon what awaited her there.

"When will you take me to the man?" he asked, wishing the engagement to be certain.

"To-morrow after supper."

"And will you go walking with me afterwards?"

"It'll be like having a steady," she said.

"Why not?" he asked, and moved closer to her on the bench, which was in a secluded path. Before she had seized the idea that he was asking to be her "steady," he had kissed her. To his surprise her face went quite white. He put his arm about her and held her against his shoulder and kissed her again.

She pulled away and jumped to her feet. "You're

Digitized by Google

pretty sudden for a new steady," she said. The color had come back, but she looked on the edge of tears.

He took hold of her hand and drew her down beside him.

"I ain't never been kissed except by boys," she said apologetically.

"That's right," he answered. "I'm a good deal older than you are."

"How old are you?" she asked, trying to make conversation after he had kissed her again.

"Thirty."

"That's old," she said. "You'd ought to be married by this time. I suppose you're hard to suit."

All the way home she kept her arm through his and walked proudly. But she left him at the corner, so as to face alone the anger of her mother. It was not as bad as she had expected, because Mrs. Flanagan had spent the day in pain, and was too weak to fuss very much. Besides, her father had taken her side. "Maggie's got sense," he said. "She would not pick up anybody who wasn't all right, would you, Mag?" And somehow Maggie believed that he knew who her companion had been.

After supper the next evening she went out to the corner to wait for him. Even if he did know where she lived she did not want to let him see the house itself, its disorder and the seven dirty children. She pretended to be looking down the street for one of the younger Flanagans when Lange appeared. He took hold of her arm at once. The boldness delighted her, because he was so much older and dressed so well.

"I guess I ought to know your name," she said.

He told her and she repeated it several times.

A few moments later she stood for the first time in her

Digitized by Google

life at the Hartwells' front door. She was not altogether at ease, and became almost boisterous, trying to appear so. Dr. Hartwell looked surprised when he opened the door; his first thought was that they had come to be married. He led them into his study before he could get a good look at the man. Then he saw a dark thick-set man with a good head. Frederica was there, too, and she was interested in this friend of Maggie's, for he was better looking and older than most of the unmarried men of the neighborhood.

"I've brought Gus Langy to you to get a recommend," said Maggie the moment she could get her breath. "He is an old friend of mine, and he wants to work at Sloane's."

"You are out of work?" asked Frederica, offering Lange a chair. Her smile was quick, evanescent, but left a trail of warm sympathy.

Lange looked at her and nodded, but said nothing. Dr. Hartwell began asking him questions. The answers were direct and short. Lange wanted to get any sort of work in the lumber yard. He wanted out-of-door work, he said, because he was used to it. He had worked in New York as a teamster, but had thought Chicago was the place to come to. Dr. Hartwell sat down to write a note to Mr. Sloane, and Maggie stood by the desk watching him; her cheeks flushed with her successful management. Lange's eyes never left Frederica. They wandered —or covered her face, her hair, her hands, her slight girlish figure. He was perfectly quiet, and yet it seemed to Frederica that he was the noisiest person she had ever been near. He deafened, blinded her, frightened her. She sat rigid and was glad that he was on the other side of the table.

Digitized by Google

Maggie took the letter from Dr. Hartwell and gave it to Lange. "Here, Gus," she said. "You'll get a job with this. Dr. Hartwell's got lots of influence."

They went out together after the usual embarrassment of thanks and appreciation.

"How can he be an old friend of Maggie's if he has just lately come to Chicago?" asked Frederica when her father came back from the front door.

"Do you think that Maggie would tell an untruth?"

"No"—Frederica paused—"not unless he made her."

"Perhaps I was too hasty in writing that note," said the doctor.

Both of them felt vague discomfort over the episode. The doctor was conscious of having acted on impulse, and Frederica still felt the man's eyes on her. Neither one of them guessed the real meaning of the few moments. Nor did Maggie, who was walking down Desplaines Street with new pride in her face. She had proved her usefulness to Gustav.

"If I wasn't a Catholic I'd want Dr. Hartwell to marry me," she said.

Lange drew her into the shade and kissed her. She accepted it this time without any tremor of surprise.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

ROMANCE IN THE DUSK

MAGGIE'S heart beat fast as she walked along the high fence on the north side of the lumber yard. At the corner she would turn and slip in through the gate and find him seated in a corner where two piles of seasoned wood made a sheltered trysting-place. Lange had described it so that she could not possibly miss finding it. He had gotten his job and had been at work a week, but she had not seen him until to-day, when he had met her on her way to work, and she had hinted that she wanted to go walking, and he had told her to meet him in the yards.

Curiosity as well as romance hurried her along the distance. Before she got to the corner she slackened with the thought that she ought to let Lange arrive first, so as to be sure not to make any mistake about the place. Her eyes were shining, and she pulled her belt down a little and felt of her hat and pressed her red lips together, as though it would give her the dignity which she felt underneath her excitement.

She turned the corner and stopped in bewilderment, for at the gate, which was twenty yards beyond, were two men. She had not thought that she might have to pass anyone, but now it flashed across her that the lumber yard gate was always shut at six o'clock and a watchman put

Digitized by Google

there. Lange must have forgotten that. Disappointment brought her to a standstill, and she was divided between the desire to turn back and the bolder desire to go on and face these men, and in some way get into the yard. She peered through the dusk and her heart beat hard; she recognized Gustav Lange, and he was talking to a policeman. Without knowing that she moved she crept nearer. Suddenly she turned and almost ran back to the corner and around it, where she leaned against the high fence—she had recognized her father.

In that moment of recognition she felt suddenly wicked. Romance grew sinister and faced her, demanding that she admit where she was going. She did not wonder why her father and Lange were there in conversation; she was thinking only of herself. Suppose her father should come to this corner! She began to run in the shadow of the fence, a little self-accused figure of trepidation. But again she stopped, because she remembered that his regular beat was in the other direction. And Lange! Perhaps he had been waiting for her and was going away; perhaps she had mistaken the time. It did seem darker than it was usually at half-past seven.

When she thought of Lange leaving she turned and retraced her steps to the corner, and standing close to the fence, looked around it. Michael Flanagan was almost at the other corner, walking in official calmness, swinging his billy. Lange was not in sight. Maggie watched her father turn the corner. Should she go home where her mother sat shiftlessly rocking, and the children were having their usual bedtime quarrels? Romance and curiosity had both left her; the desire to see Lange was not pulling at her as it had at first; but the picture of her home, and the thought of the dull hours she would

Digitized by Google

spend there waiting for her own bedtime, pushed her on until, without making any decision, she was at the lumber yard gate.

It was ajar. No one was in sight. The street was empty, and as far as she could see through the bars of the gate the yards were empty. Drops of rain splashed down upon her suddenly and made her jump, as though some one had spoken to her. She thought of her hat with its chiffon bows which would be ruined by the rain, and she ran quickly through the gate, turned to the right as Lange had directed, and found herself face to face with him, seated on a pile of planks under a protecting roof.

Her heart stopped. She stood rigid, looking at him. Some high excitement in his face had changed it. Maggie could not analyze the change, she did not know that he had pushed back his hair and showed the broad high forehead of an idealist; she did not know that a great discovery was beating in his head and transfiguring his features so that they looked larger and stronger than usual, and that his eyes were gleaming with a new possibility of victory—of victory soon and sure. She did notice, however, that the cords of his neck were tight, as though his square ill-shaven jaws were set.

He was looking at her, but not seeing her, and that was what frightened her. It seemed a dreadful moment to her, and she would have fled from it, but that it was raining hard now, and, inconsequent as it might be, she was conscious of her hat. She drew a long breath. "Mr. Lange?" she said.

He reached out and took hold of her hand and pulled her to the ledge where he was sitting. "It is you, Maggie, who are my mascot," but he said it in Hungarian, and she shivered, though he was smiling and apparently

Digitized by Google

seeing her very clearly now in spite of the dusk. As she sat down abruptly and awkwardly on the pile of lumber she caught a whiff of his breath. At once she was relieved.

"I guess you're a little drunk," she said. "It makes you look so queer."

The fact that he was a little drunk made her freer with him, less self-conscious and much more responsive. He had become, in her mind, the younger of the two, and she the responsible one. A look of the maternal came into her Irish eyes, and she moved closer to him. But he did not heed her remark, except by a pressure of his arm about her waist. She had come into his moment of excitement, she was a part of it, but for the time being, not a person to him.

Maggie waited another moment before she spoke again. "My father always talks a lot when he's had too much, but you're not like him—I suppose it's because you're a Bohemian." She was trying so hard to get into the commonplace with him, out of this uncanny, rain-enveloped silent joy—for she felt that whisky had made him joyous, not fault-finding and voluble, as she had thought all men were when they were drunk. She leaned forward and looked up in his face with the woman's inevitable demand for attention. Her warm breath touched his neck, and suddenly his exuberance knew no bounds; he threw his other arm around her and pressed her closer and closer to him with her face still upturned and her hat hanging back, pulling her curly hair with it.

One of the secondary instincts made her pretend to herself that he was joking, that this was part of a game, and that she must not let him know that she was quivering in his arms.

Digitized by Google

"I was just thinking you didn't know I had come yet, but I guess you do." She spoke breathlessly, and her lips were dry on her teeth.

Then he released her and stood up as though he were going out into the rain which was coming through the roof in places and was bringing the fragrance of forests from the piles of lumber. A forest cut into planks, dishonored by saw and plane, lay within an inclosing fence —the fence itself as degraded as a prison warden set to jail his fellows. But the rain beating upon it vehemently called out the memories from every board, and the air was full of pungent primeval perfume, not to be withstood by any human who had the animal strong in him.

The great primeval world smelled strong in the dusk, and man's first passion was not the passion of love, but of conflict. Primeval man used to come back to his abiding place and the woman waiting there became part of his sense of triumph, as the touch of her ran into his blood, heated by a great fight. Lange was full of his own triumph and unconscious of Maggie. And she was irresistibly attracted by whatever it was that was surging within him, and afraid that he was going to leave her.

She jumped down from her seat, too, and took hold again of his hand. "What are you thinking about? You ain't thinking about me," she said.

"I think about you all the time," he said.

Maggie had succeeded in dragging him down from his exultation into the boundaries of her own thoughts. So it was perhaps that the vanity of woman helped the primeval man to deceive himself as to the place of woman. But his answer did not quite satisfy her, willing as she was to be flattered in words, as she had previously been flattered by his notice of her.

Digitized by Google

"That ain't the real truth," she said.

"You're right," he replied. His triumph began to ooze out in a boastfulness which might endanger him. "The real truth," he repeated, "is that I'm playing a big game and it's going my way." Suddenly he stretched up his arms and threw back his head. "I win!" he said, and it sounded like a challenge to some one who might deny his assertion.

Maggie's curiosity allowed her a moment's freedom from self-consciousness. "Who are you playing the game with?" and there was cunning in the ordinary tone of voice she assumed, which was likely to suggest that she already knew, but was willing to hear it from his lips, if he needed a confidante.

"I'm playing against a man who took what belonged to me!"

"Who?" she asked, leaning forward, impressed by his manner, though not knowing it was the tone of vengeance.

Lange was looking off toward the gate. He saw some one pass and peer in, and he pulled Maggie back into a deeper shadow, where she repeated her question, "Who is it?" referring to the man in the game and not the one at the gate. But the presence of an outsider, however indistinct in the growing darkness, recalled Lange to himself and to his natural reticence, and he turned to Maggie for the first time in his usual way and felt her little warm hand holding his fingers in a tight clasp; he was no longer exultant nor exalted, but his blood still ran fast.

"Come on," he said.

"I can't," she answered, "the rain will spoil my hat."

"I'll get you another."

Digitized by Google

She laughed, and taking off her hat, slipped it under her outer skirt and held it protectingly. Then they went out of their shelter. A big arc light flared upon them at the instant, and Lange started.

"If it hadn't rained, this would have been a good enough place," he said.

At the gate Maggie paused. "I've got to go now," he said, "so good night."

She could have cried. What a disappointing time she had had, sitting on a pile of boards in the rain, and now going home again. She did not know what she had been expecting at the tryst, but she had come in high hopes. Her "good night" showed her state of mind to Lange, and he faced her.

"Maggie, I told you to come here because I was going to ask you some questions about some one you know; but some one else told me before you got here."

"Oh, my father!" she said, as though she had been cheated.

Lange spoke sharply. "You saw us?"

"What did he tell you?" she asked. Curiosity was taking the place of hurt romance.

"Never mind." He brushed away the possibility of her repeating her question. "Does he know that you know me?"

"I never told him," said Maggie, feeling that she was deceiving Lange, for she was sure her father knew. And she started through the gate.

"Wait a minute," said Lange, and took hold of the hand that had held her hat under her skirt. He had jerked it a little and the hat fell in the mud, white chiffon and all. "Oh!" She stooped and picked it up and her tears fell upon the wreck. That was her final and un-

Digitized by Google

conscious appeal to him. He forgot his triumph and his game. He took the hat out of her hand, bent it in an unrecognizable wad, and flung it over the fence into the middle of the street.

"Come, now," he said, kissing her rather wildly. "You shall have another one to-morrow, the finest one you want. And I think we'd better go."

The long weird shadows thrown by the arc light, the heavy dropping of the rain, and the strong smell of many woods, seemed grewsome to him. And, besides, he had been talking so lately to her father, and he remembered that Flanagan's face was not without pride of a sort.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

KAFFEE KLATSCH

THE day that Frederica got back to the city was full of warm sunshine and lake breezes. The little house had that air of loneliness and expectancy which is almost depressing on the return from a vacation. It seemed as though something had left it, and Frederica became almost irritable as the day passed and the house kept its unfamiliar look. She did not realize that it was because she had gone out in the expectation of something which had not come to pass; and that as she had crossed the threshold in going she had imagined herself coming back in a certain mood, and had not.

Frederica's mind had been for so long accustomed to its round of duties and neighborhood experiences that she did not realize that it was romance which was calling her now, and that she was occupied with the thought of Harden as a romantic person. She had never used any adjective but "interesting" in thinking of him to herself, and her unconsciousness of his charm for her made that charm much more powerful.

Anne and her father were full of exuberance and renewed their work in high spirits, not even noticing Frederica's depression. But a week had passed before Harden gave any indication of his presence in the city again.

Digitized by Google

Then he came to Dr. Hartwell to ask for a letter of introduction which would enable him to speak before the Conference of Ministers which was to be held early in September. He stayed but a few moments and saw only Dr. Hartwell. Freda was over at the Flanagans helping Mrs. Flanagan put little Michael to bed, for the child had been suddenly taken ill, and it was feared that he had scarlet fever. She came into the study just after Harden had gone out, and she stopped on the threshold, a queer look passing over her face. "Who has been here?" she said to her father.

"Mr. Harden," answered her father, not looking up from his work.

Frederica said nothing as she went back into her own room, her heart feeling very heavy that she should have missed seeing him. Then suddenly she asked herself how it was that she had known that he had been there. There had been nothing in the look of the room, he had left nothing behind him, there had been no sound of closing doors or of departing footsteps. Yet before she asked her father, she had known of his presence in the room. She could not explain it to herself. Frederica's sense of smell, although she did not know it, was very acute.

The next afternoon when she was sitting out on the back porch sewing, she heard his voice in the study, and jumped to her feet to go in. Then suddenly remembering that he had not called at Lake Woods, she hesitated. But the impulse to go was stronger than her hesitation, and in she went, her heart beating fast.

Harden interrupted himself in the middle of a sentence and rose to greet her. There was a certain formality in his manner which she felt instantly, and she scarcely smiled at him; her gray eyes looked into his with surprise.

Digitized by Google

"You did not go to Lake Woods after all." She had not intended to say that. Something within her censured her the moment the words had passed her lips. In her confusion she crumpled the ruffles she was making into a ball as a boy would have done.

Harden looked at her curiously. "Yes, I was there for a week," he answered. "Did you enjoy your visit?"

"Very much," replied Dr. Hartwell, and with the natural egotism of a man who does most of the talking for his family, he excluded Frederica and went back to the subject under discussion, quoting the interrupted remark which Harden had just made.

Frederica stood there for another moment and then turned and left the room. Her father did not notice her departure, and Harden sat down and gave him renewed attention. She took her sewing into her room and tried unsuccessfully to smooth out the wrinkles she had made, but her mind was not on her work, and every few moments she pressed her lips together and shook her head, as though denying something to herself. She was trying to pretend that she was not hurt, and that she was not trying to listen to the men's voices as they came through dining room and kitchen into the little side room where she sat on the foot of her bed. Anne, coming from the rear house, called to her that Michael Flanagan only had the chickenpox and would she go upstairs to Mrs. Schneider and tell her so, for the two boys, Adolph and Fritz, had been kept in the house all day by their mother, who had the most extreme fear of contagious diseases.

"Ach, ja," sighed Mrs. Schneider with relief, as Freda stood at the back door upstairs; "it is gut das der boys can again in der yard spielen. In two more hours mit her boys in der house I could to die. Heraus!" she

Digitized by Google

shouted, laughing, to the two noisy children who scuttled downstairs and whooped loudly for five minutes.

Frederica started to follow them, but Mrs. Schneider pulled her into the kitchen. "Gewiss, sure, you stay by me for a cup of coffee. Nein!" she exclaimed, "it is besser I bring coffee und meine frische Kuchen down mit der papa und Miss Anne—Kaffee Klatsch, ach, ja!"

Frederica smiled. "That's a splendid idea," she said. "I'll go down and get the table ready on the porch. We have a friend there."

Mrs. Schneider's love of social occasions was flamboyant. She opened her preserved fruit and put her fresh cakes into stately piles on her best plate, while Frederica flew down and first of all ran into the study.

"Kaffee Klatsch," she said enigmatically to her father, who answered in her mood; "another? So soon?" He explained to Harden. "Our friend upstairs always shares her fresh cakes with us. It is my theory that we should eat together in the name of friendship."

"Theory!" exclaimed Freda, laughing. "You know it's the cakes! In five minutes I will call you," and she disappeared again. Only for an instant had her merry eyes turned to Harden, but the flash had burned whatever barrier had risen between them.

After she had put the white cloth on the little porch table, placed where the outer world was completely hidden by the vines, and had put a great jar of goldenrod in front of the prosaic ice box, she ran into her room and called through the window to Mrs. Schneider, who was coming heavily down the back stairs with the loaded tray, that she was getting dressed for the Kaffee Klatsch and not to be too quick in putting the things on the table. She hurried into her best summer dress, the

Digitized by Google

one she had put on several afternoons at the Sloanes' in the hope that Mr. Harden would call, and she brushed her hair, although she knew perfectly well that in five minutes it would all be flying loose again.

"Roses in der cheeks!" exclaimed Mrs. Schneider with delight when Frederica appeared in the door. The coffee smelled as only festival coffee can, the cakes were still warm and dusted over with sugar and spice, the preserved fruit glistened in the little glass dishes. Frederica pushed the chairs into social disarray, stuck a red geranium in Mrs. Schneider's ample belt, and called to her father. Anne had gone down the street on some errand and they did not wait for her.

Mrs. Schneider was disposed for a moment to be a little stiff with the stranger, but when he spoke to her in German, she melted into her usual exuberant volubility, and laughed before and after every one of her own jokes. Harden laughed a great deal, too, and so did Frederica. How she had seized upon Mrs. Schneider's idea for her own use! Her castle of dreams in which she was living quite unconsciously was flooded with the afternoon light. To be sure, she was sitting on the balcony with him as yet; he had not crossed the threshold, but she had no thought of asking him in. Her delight and gayety came from the warmth of the sunshine, and from the memory that only a half hour before she had been standing in a cold mist, groping for the path that led away from the castle.

But she did not speak of Lake Woods again. Frederica was one who shut the door upon reasons for things. The feeling of her own wonder, her own curiosity, always frightened her. She was by instinct afraid of what she could not on the instant understand. She might

Digitized by Google

pretend to understand, in order to get away from any subject which held in it the unknown motives or behavior of another. That was one reason why she was so popular in the neighborhood. She came into the lives of the community just as far as they wished her to, and when she paused, it was not with a question but with a nod, which indicated that no explanation of anything was necessary.

For some reason Eugene Harden had not kept his word about calling at the Sloanes', and Freda had been hurt when she realized it fully; but in her customary way she had shut the door upon her desire to learn the reason, and promptly forgot that he had been in Lake Woods, and that she had been quite miserable waiting to see him there. He *was* here on the back porch, and talking with great interest to Mrs. Schneider in German, which her father could follow, but she could not.

Mrs. Schneider's face grew earnest, and the red deepened in her cheeks. "Ach, ja," she said suddenly, to Dr. Hartwell, "der gentleman understands well wat my Otto believes. In Europe over all, gentlemen understand was here in America only der Arbeiter—workingman understand." She drew herself up in conscious dignity. For the first time she felt there was a bridge across the social chasm which separated her from the Hartwells, and here was a fine-looking man with an air of wealth and ease standing on that bridge with her and looking down into the rushing chaos in the chasm.

Anne came in presently and at once the atmosphere lost some of its merriment. Mrs. Schneider, who was quite at home with Dr. Hartwell, felt Anne's philanthropic self-consciousness, although she would not have known what to call it. But to-day, buttressed by the in-

Digitized by Google

terest of Harden, she held out for some time in her enthusiasm and her native tongue. She had the advantage of Anne there, and besides, Eugene Harden was interested. He had asked her many questions about her husband's work. At length he said he would like to meet him, and Mrs. Schneider, in sudden eagerness, invited him to stay to supper.

"I will," he said, and then he asked Dr. Hartwell where he could find a telephone so that he could break an engagement with Mr. Gilfeather.

The name brought to Frederica an indistinct vision of a banquet served in luxurious surroundings which he was probably giving up for the sake of making Mrs. Schneider happy—for it did look as if all her happiness hung upon his acceptance of her invitation. She thought it very fine in him, not knowing, of course, that the Gilfeather dinner was a much more commonplace and much less significant affair to him than Mrs. Schneider's.

While he was out telephoning, Mrs. Schneider gathered her belongings together and went upstairs in excitement, begging Freda to entertain her guest until she could get the supper cooked and her husband into his best clothes.

"Sit mit him inside, Miss Freda; Otto he comes der back stairs up in his work Kleider; und you come also to supper. Der boys will eat outside."

Frederica wavered, but finally accepted, in spite of the disapproval which showed in Anne's eyes. Later, in the study, just as Harden was coming up the front steps, her father asked her not to go up. "They will talk German, Freda, and that will be hard on you, or else they will think they must speak English, and that will not be fair to them."

She saw his point, and after a half hour's talk, when

Digitized by Google

the summons to supper came through Adolph, standing sheepishly in the study door, she showed Mr. Harden up the front stairs, and then told Mrs. Schneider she must help Anne, and go to prayer meeting afterwards. As she turned to go down Harden came to her—Mrs. Schneider had gone to see what delayed her husband in his dressing.

"When are you going to tell me some more of your dreams?" he asked.

"My dreams?" She stood demure and hesitant.

He put his hands on her shoulders and looked into her eyes. "You are a child of dreams."

She shook under his touch, and he dropped his hands quickly and stepped back as though she had pushed him.

"A child?" he repeated, questioning himself.

Mrs. Schneider returned with her arm through Otto's, whose face was flushed with the quick toilet which, to his disgust, his wife had insisted upon, but he showed big white teeth in his smile of welcome, and thrust out a hand hard as the oak beams he worked with every day.

While the men were shaking hands there was a knock at the back door, and Mrs. Schneider went to open it. A moment afterwards she came in, followed by Gustav Lange, who stood to one side, waiting to speak to Mr. Schneider. He was not so well dressed as he had been when Frederica had first seen him, and his hair was rough and his hands dirty, as though he had just come from work. Schneider introduced him to Harden, and Frederica, who was standing near the door ready to go downstairs, and yet reluctant, saw the Hungarian start and put his hands behind him. From where she stood she could not see his face, but she could see his hands

Digitized by Google

clinching and unclinching behind his back. It was as though he was revealing himself to her unwittingly. She listened to hear what they would say, but they spoke in German. Harden's voice was as genial and undisturbed as it had been when he had met Mr. Schneider. Lange's voice shook, and before Frederica left he had gone back into the kitchen, and she heard the outer door slam. On the way downstairs she was oppressed, just as she had been after Lange's departure from her father's study. She had a sense of strong physical repulsion which amounted to fear.

In the dining room below Anne was remonstrating with Dr. Hartwell for his offer of the chapel for Harden to speak in. "What do you know about him?" she asked, "except what he says of himself?" Her animosity was not so great as was her protective instinct. She scented danger for the idealist; she dreaded his growing interest and excitement as likely to end in another disappointment. She had known his enthusiasms before. Besides, if he were to coöperate with the Austrian, Frederica would naturally see more of the man; and Anne was determined that she was to marry Alec Sloane, only now she had learned she must be politic and let neither one of them guess her interest in them.

Dr. Hartwell was not to be persuaded just yet, however.

"You are prejudiced, Anne," he said. "Mr. Harden has made many friends among the men I know. They would not be likely to have anything to do with an imposter." He seated himself at the table and began looking for a possible bit of white meat on the platter before him—then remembered that he had eaten most of it at noon and Freda had taken the rest over to little Michael

Digitized by Google

Flanagan. "I feel sure that when I have had a chance to discuss certain points with him that he will begin to see we must work from within, from the spirit, not as he now insists: in the material affairs of these men. And you must not forget, Anne, that it is my duty to share my light with him."

Anne could not answer him if he believed that he was the one to influence and not the passive one, so she changed her tactics abruptly.

"Well," she said, "he is in love with Frederica!"

The doctor dropped his fork and stared across the table at her.

"Didn't you notice how he never took his eyes off her while they were in the study?"

Dr. Hartwell took a deep breath of relief that her theory was based on so flimsy a thing.

"She was talking to him. How could he help it? Why, Anne, I didn't know you were so romantic."

"You didn't?" said Anne, with a touch of sarcasm in her voice, for now that she had discovered her own state of mind toward Dr. Hartwell, she was likely to grow a little bitter if he continued to take her as a matter of course, as a practical and efficient person, static in the friendly relation in which she stood to him.

As Frederica came in he looked up, shaking his head, on the point of repeating Anne's absurdity, as he thought it; but there was something so far removed from jest in her face that he did not.

"Mr. Schneider is a very fine man," said Frederica, taking her place at table.

"Have you just discovered it?" asked Anne.

"He is rather a dangerous man," said her father; "a freethinker, and exceedingly discontented. Mr. Sloane

Digitized by Google

has been very forbearing in letting him keep his place in the lumber yard."

"But he is a good workman, Alec says." Frederica spoke carefully.

"He stirs up the men. He has been the ring-leader in two strikes."

"That's splendid!" said Freda.

For the second time Dr. Hartwell dropped his fork.

"What did I tell you?" Anne said to him.

She had not told him anything which could possibly be considered as relevant to Frederica's remark about Mr. Schneider, but Dr. Hartwell understood.

"Have you chosen the hymns for to-night?" he asked.

"Why, yes!" answered Freda, looking from one to the other in perplexity.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

FROM MRS. SCANLAN'S

FREDERICA was distressed when she reached Mrs. Scanlan's, where the Mothers' Meeting was to be held, to find the shriveled little woman tired out and excited. Mrs. Scanlan had just moved into the small brick house opposite the lumber yards, and had herself papered and painted the rooms. All the morning she had been cleaning for the meeting, and had hung the coarse lace curtains at the windows to hide the view of the black fence across the street. When Frederica came in she was sitting in the back room drinking a cup of hot water. "I feel so cold and queer," she said. She was trembling, and her face looked a dead gray under the iron-gray hair. Her wrinkles were deeper than ever, and her sunken eyes duller.

The boy sat on a chair close to his mother and watched her. Frederica felt, as she had many times, the horror of his constant watching. The boy was epileptic and partially paralyzed. He had been that way ever since he had had the scarlet fever fourteen years before, when he was a baby. Mrs. Scanlan had told Frederica about it one time.

"We didn't have a doctor for him," she explained, "his father bein' out of a job through Sloane's black-

Digitized by Google

listin' him; and afterwards the doctor says it was the fever did it. He wasn't very sick, but the days I went out scrubbin', and his father lookin' for work, he wasn't took care of, and it left him queer and limpsy."

And for fourteen years the boy had watched his mother just as he was watching to-day. Only when he slept did she have any release from his constant gaze.

"When the Mothers come," said Frederica, "I shall send them home until next week, until you feel better."

"No, no," said Mrs. Scanlan sharply, "they must stay, they mustn't go. I've worked hard to make the rooms nice, and Scanlan would be disappointed if they don't see 'em."

Frederica praised the cleanliness and the order, and after some further discussion had to promise to let the meeting go on. But only a few of the women had come when Mrs. Scanlan fainted and fell off her chair. Her first words, however, when she opened her eyes again, were: "Now, ye're not goin' home on account o' this—I'm just tired; nothin's the matter!"

At first the boy had been stunned by what he saw; then he rose shakily from his chair, and began moving about the kitchen. Faster and faster he walked from one of the women to another, peering into each face.

"Hold me! Hold me!" he said in a voice that stiffened Frederica, who was making a cup of strong tea. Mrs. Benson put her large strong arms about his limp shoulders and kept him by her side, knowing that he was afraid he was going to have a fit. He stood quiet and watched his mother trying to drink the tea.

The other women came in one by one, some with shawls over their heads. They became very much subdued when they saw Mrs. Scanlan's face, and talked in whispers. At

Digitized by Google

last the speaker came, a Mrs. Parrish from the North Side. Frederica let her in and explained that the meeting must be short. Mrs. Parrish was short, thickset, and very plain, and on these missionary visits she dressed severely, in order to set an example to the poor.

When she was seated in a chair between the two front windows, and the women had taken the chairs placed along the two sides of the front room, and in the wide double doorway leading into the kitchen, Frederica opened the meeting.

"Mrs. Parrish, who comes from a big church on the North Side, is going to talk to us to-day on 'Our Duties,'" she said, and then sat down quickly; she was too much stirred by what had just happened to say any more.

While Mrs. Parrish was making the usual opening remarks, Frederica looked over the heads of the women to where Mrs. Scanlan was sitting in the kitchen. To her relief Mrs. Schneider, who was making the coffee for the refreshments, was keeping an eye on her. The boy had dragged his chair close to his mother's, and sat looking at her more steadily than ever.

"My good friends," began Mrs. Parrish, "We are all sisters, sisters of the Lord. We have souls to care for, and we must not forget our responsibilities."

That was the way Mrs. Parrish usually spoke. Frederica had heard her several times, so her mind wandered. She sat looking at the women before her. Sisters they might be. Mrs. Benson with a square peasant face; next to her withered old Mrs. Johnson, in whose eyes dwelt surprise, as though at some time she had been startled by one or another fact of existence and had never regained composure. In the corner sat Mrs. Cullom, or, as Frederica had named her, "Vanity in Despair," a woman

Digitized by Google

of fifty, who wore cheap rings on her scragly hands, a pink ribbon and amber beads around her yellow neck, torn lace in her sleeves, and broken feathers in her old velvet bonnet. Mrs. Flanagan, who came as guest, sat with tears in her eyes, listening with her whole shrinking body, carrying under her heart another burden who was to crowd still more the destiny of the Flanagan house. Mrs. Balowsky, who sat in the doorway, was rotund contentment, indifferent to all troubles so long as the baby at home was not having a spasm.

Sisters these might be, but Frederica had never felt their differences so acute, nor contrasted their lives with those of other women like Mrs. Parrish, who at the moment was saying:

"We must ask the Lord to give us contentment and patience." She was quite carried away by the attention of the women and the sound of her own metallic voice. "Patience is what we need. And when we get to heaven, my sisters, we will live in the glory of the Lord, in blessed peace and praisegiving. Let us pray."

She closed her eyes and began to pray quite loud and distinctly. Frederica was amazed at the anger which was rising within her, and she opened her eyes as a protest against the prayer.

It was as though the seeds which had dropped from the conversations between her father and Eugene Harden had suddenly taken root, and that for the first time the rather vague ideas of their discussions were becoming vivid and full of life so unexpectedly as to be painful to her.

She had heard her father insist that the law of the spirit, that resignation, meekness, contentment with one's own lot, whatever that lot might be, was the great law

Digitized by Google

of progress. And here in this one hour she saw that there was contentment and resignation and meekness, and as a result, nothing in that little room but what might bring tears in her eyes.

Mrs. Scanlan was not crying out against the awful destiny which held her son there, speechless and watchful. Vanity in Despair made no demands, did not even sigh deeply for the things of the flesh which years ago as a young girl she had wanted and never attained. Mrs. Balowsky was resigned to whatever came into her life, and there was not any one of the women who was not meek.

And here before them stood a stout, plain, severely dressed woman of wealth, whose experience in life had been dull and monotonous, who did not now have the mental vision which almost any one of these foreign women, coming from a dozen different places across the water into a land of hope, had had, and still might have. And this woman was urging them to believe in a future life, a life where the rewards were to offset the suffering of the present. Not that she was insisting that these sufferings were very great. One could doubt that she realized at all the destinies written in the faces before her.

Frederica read them. Almost up to the time when she had come into Mrs. Scanlan's this afternoon, she had been rather indifferent; she had accepted their experiences as inevitable; she had seen so much of the humor, and they had rather kept from her their own sadness. Now the sympathy which she felt, which was so mingled with a growing anger, was all the warmer, all the more human because of the firm basis of friendship which had been without pity and without analysis. Had she been a girl from another part of town come over here to lead this

Digitized by Google

meeting, and had been much stirred by what she saw, her emotions might well have been questioned as morbid. But she was perfectly natural; she was at home there; these women were more to her than any other women in the world; and as she sat there listening to the sharp voice and commonplace words of Mrs. Parrish, she had a great desire to fling her arms about those whom she loved and tell them that she was angry. She would have liked to stand up there in Mrs. Parrish's place and urge them to cast aside meekness and resignation, to go back to their husbands with wrath in their hearts; to say to every man in their homes: "We must fight! We must change the conditions which have brought to us little of leisure and less of comfort!" She would have liked to tell them the things that she had heard Eugene Harden telling, of the great movement in Europe, of the thousands of men who were moved by one great idea, one great desire—the desire for industrial freedom. She would have liked to put into the simplest language the prophecies she had heard him make to her father—that before another year had passed, if the workingmen of America would stand together, there should be at least a measure of freedom. There would be a day of eight hours work and sixteen hours for human living. She would have liked to repeat to them in terms of groceries and meats and clothing what it would mean if all these things were sold at the cost of producing, and not, as now, to give big profits to a few men.

Her muscles tightened as she sat there, and she would have liked the best of all to urge them to fight. She had read as a child of her revolutionary forefathers with a feeling that she, too, was a fighter. She had not felt that she belonged to an age where the lifting of one

Digitized by Google

man's hand against another was a thing to be deplored. She realized that the blood that was stirring in her was the blood of combat, a thing to be read of in history with admiration, though mocked at to-day. She could almost fancy that were there a call to arms she could lead this band of women into the middle of the street and fight with them. But in spite of all her emotion she sat quite still, swallowing hard every once in a while to keep down the tears, and wishing that Mrs. Parrish would get through.

Then she saw Mrs. Scanlan get up from her chair and come toward the door of the bedroom. Some of the women looked at her from under their eyelids when she passed them, the boy close at her heels. Without interrupting the prayer, Frederica went to her and opened the bedroom door. Mrs. Scanlan threw herself on the bed in the little dark hole of a room. Frederica closed the door behind them.

"Good Lord! Good Lord!" said Mrs. Scanlan, covering her face with her shaking hands. "I'm so sick! I'm so sick! Go out and leave me."

Frederica left her with the boy, who sat on the edge of the bed watching her.

When Mrs. Parrish had finished her prayer, Frederica gave some notices to the women about their next meeting. In her soul was conflict indescribable.

Then the bedroom door opened and out again came Mrs. Scanlan. "I thought ye mightn't enjoy the refreshments if I was in there," she said. Mrs. Schneider poured her a cup of coffee, and then passed the coffee among the women. Mrs. Balowsky was going about with the plate of cake. First they served Mrs. Parrish, who was not quite at ease, now that she was through talking.

Digitized by Google

She handled the cup as though she were not sure it was clean, and left her cake untasted, and was condescending to the women who were brought up and introduced to her by Mrs. Benson. There was constraint until Mr. Scanlan came in, his face full of anxiety. On his arrival they began to go. Mr. Scanlan put his dinner pail on the back of the stove and talked in a whisper to his wife, who was dully trying to explain.

"I felt so queer, worse'n sick, and he was likely to have a time." She pointed to the boy, who had left his chair and was standing close in front of his father. Frederica saw the boy lift his weaker hand and put it on his father's shoulder and look at him. Some question, greater than any others that had pressed his dim consciousness, lay in his eyes. His whole limp being acknowledged the overwhelming mystery of human existence. Circumstances had left him uncared for when he was a baby, some natural law had been transgressed and he was paying the penalty. The question deepened in his eyes. "What is the matter?" he said in a thick voice.

Mr. Scanlan made no answer, for had there been an answer it could not have reached the boy who had only come into life as far as the question. Frederica put her hand to her throat, afraid that she was going to show her emotion. It was anger that she felt—and why anger? Why not pity?

Mrs. Parrish was going. She told Frederica to call upon her again; she felt that it was her duty to help these people. She shook hands with Mrs. Benson and went out to her carriage. Frederica helped to wash the coffee cups, while Mr. Scanlan put the chairs straight, and the boy ate scraps of cake from the plates. Mrs. Scanlan spoke to Frederica when she started to go.

Digitized by Google

"I'm much obliged," she said. "I'm glad they stayed. I'd 'a' hated to see 'em go after I'd fixed it up for 'em."

"You're a wonderful woman, Mrs. Scanlan!" That was all that Frederica could say, she was so stirred at the courage of the gray face before her in the dusk. When she went out she saw the boy draw up his chair close to his mother's. Mrs. Benson was going to stay and get supper.

As she started down the street Frederica's heart beat quickly; Eugene Harden was walking toward her. She took a long breath of relief, for she meant to tell him about the Scanlans and her own feelings at the Mothers' Meeting.

"Miss Forester told me you were here," he said as he came up to her. "Let us go across the viaduct before supper."

"I must walk a long time," said Frederica, "and I cannot talk for—for a little." To her surprise she was fighting tears in her heart. He fell into step and they walked in silence, looking ahead at the dreary, muddy street, while now and then a gust of wind blew pieces of torn paper and rags across the sidewalk.

On the viaduct she felt that she was crossing into another world, and she relaxed. He seemed to know, and spoke of the men meeting them. "Your procession is in a hurry to-night."

"Poor men!" she said.

Harden stopped short. "Why?" he asked.

"You know why," she answered. "You are the one who has made me feel their struggle."

"Struggle?" He repeated the word. "You face that word's meaning now?" He looked into the face she had lifted toward him.

Digitized by Google

"It's like a horrible picture," she said. "Men fighting, fighting, and going into the darkness!"

He paused and leaned against the railing and looked at the railroad tracks running in many parallels far off into the dimness. Trains were passing under them; carloads of lumber stood alongside the low freight-house. Steam and smoke hung over it all. Frederica saw a new look of exultation in Harden's face. She wondered at it, for she thought she had learned from him her unhappiness in the conditions of these men, whose lives and limitations she had always accepted as part of the inevitable scheme of life. And now when she was deep in a new sense of it, he was showing a kind of joy as he stood looking off at the tracks.

"Not going into the darkness, Frederica." He seemed to use her name unconsciously—it was the first time. "This is only the dawn of the world—grand and somber, yet with flashes of a great light now and then; not enough to show the way, but enough to light the faces of the men who are struggling in this dawn—of the men and a few women." He turned and put his hand on her shoulder. "You are one of the women. You are going to suffer, child!"

"I do now," she said, and yet at that very moment joy was pressing upon her. He had called her "Frederica," and his hand was on her shoulder. That he called her "child," too, did not lessen her gladness.

They went on over the viaduct and reached the open space near the lake and turned north. "Are you tired?" he asked.

She was not.

"Then you will like my plan perhaps. We are going to the concert—after we have had dinner."

Digitized by Google

Frederica's pleasure was troubled by the thought that she had on an old green dress and hat. She did not like to speak of that, though, so she said: "I'm afraid Anne and my father may worry."

"I asked your father," said Eugene.

"But these—I'm not dressed for a concert." To her mind the dinner was vague.

He laughed. "No, you are not dressed for a concert, you are dressed for a meeting of wood nymphs. They are waiting for you somewhere—but you can't go!"

Before she realized it they were entering the dining room of the Leland and she was sitting at a table near the window. There were not many people in the room, and the waiters were very quiet. It held a sort of enchantment for Frederica. She really knew nothing of this life of easy service and quiet, except through books. She had never missed it; but now that she was in it, it was fascinating her. She forgot Mrs. Scanlan and the boy; she did not remember Mrs. Parrish, who certainly could not have belonged to a place like this. While Harden, without consulting her, was ordering the dinner, she let herself sink into the comfort of being in the luxurious room. The mirrors, the chandeliers, the flowers, and well-dressed women, the clink of dishes and silver, made a subtle music which was creeping through her blood. Eugene Harden caught the look of it in her face, and watched her closely over the top of the menu. He seemed surprised that she should be yielding so completely to the influences about her. He did not speak so long as she was occupied with the new impressions, but when at last her eyes came back to him, he asked her if she would have wine.

"No, indeed," she said quickly; and then a second

Digitized by Google

thought pressed upon the shocked idea of herself being invited to take wine. "I suppose everyone drinks wine in Vienna." She said it as though apologizing for him.

While they were eating and talking he watched her hands, small and thin. Every once in a while she raised one to push back a straggling lock of hair which kept falling over her forehead.

Her gayety was hushed somewhat by the sense of strangers in the room with her, but she was enjoying it all, particularly the sound of his voice and his intent eyes. All the outside world dropped back and left only that one room hanging in space, and there she was swinging in it with this man who had come so unexpectedly into her life. It *was* enchantment.

But just as dessert was brought to them the spell was broken. She saw Alec Sloane going out of the dining-room door. He had come from the other side of the room and had not passed her, yet he must have seen her; and the idea that he had been in the room with them made her uncomfortable.

Harden had not caught sight of the young fellow, but he saw her face. "What is it?" he asked.

"Alec Sloane just went out," she said. "He was *here*."

"Do you want me to bring him back?" He started to rise.

"No! Oh, no!" said Frederica quickly.

"Your father likes him."

"Yes," said Frederica, "but I don't want to—to marry him." The words had slipped out, and yet she was not sorry.

"Do you think I ought to marry him?" she asked. "Anne says that it is a wonderful opportunity to do

Digitized by Google

good, because I could keep him interested in the work over there."

"You must only marry for the sake of your own happiness," said Eugene; and after a pause, with a little effort, he said: "Perhaps he could make you happy."

Frederica put down her cup with a gesture of remonstrance. "I shall never marry for happiness," she said. "That would be selfish, and I do not want to think about myself, but about others."

Harden spoke definitely, leaning toward her. "Then do not marry at all. It would make you think about yourself. You could not help it."

"Anne says that he needs me."

"But do *you* need him?"

She raised her eyes with the light of new self-knowledge in them.

"No," she said, "I don't *need* him. Is that the test you make for loving?"

The waiter came with the bill, and Frederica thought her question might go unanswered, but Harden spoke as the waiter left. "I do not know what test I should make." He looked thoughtfully at the flowers on their table, and she became aware of his silence over these things. Never before had their conversation even touched on romance.

She spoke impulsively. "Is it because you love your work that you don't want to love anyone and do not want anyone to love you?"

"How is it that you know that?" He looked into her eyes with a sort of fear in his which she felt. She wished she had not spoken.

"I don't know," she said. "But the roots of your heart grow way down into a love for people. You would

Digitized by Google

not want to pull them up for the sake of just one person."

"Frederica," he said, "you are not quite grown up yet." He looked relieved at her answer.

Pain flashed into her eyes for a moment. "No," she said almost in a whisper, "and it hurts—to grow. It hurts!"

He rose from the table with the necessity of keeping silence. She was glad to go, too. The outside world had gotten into the room by some ill chance.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX

THE CONCERT

THEY walked the short distance to the old Exposition Building, where the orchestra played every evening. This concert was to be a new experience, because she went into the place with her nerves strung tight. The musty smell of the big barnlike room was streaked by the odors of beer, tobacco, and sawdust, of fir trees which stood about, and of the freshly printed pink programmes. In the middle of the room and in front of the platform were the rows and rows of chairs, many hundreds of them filled. Farther back were the small tables and their chairs and the little green trees doomed to a tub existence, which were so usual in the concert halls and gardens that Eugene Harden knew abroad. He sat down at one of these tables and asked Frederica if she would have lemonade or an ice. Then he asked her if he might smoke. It was the first time she had ever seen him smoke. She knew that it was absurd, but she began to feel very worldly, and it was a pleasant feeling.

Before this when she had come to a concert it had been in the afternoon, and she had always gone into the first rows of the twenty-five cent seats and had not even looked around at the people sitting at the tables; they had belonged, in her mind, to a world so far outside her own

Digitized by Google

and her father's. To-night she found herself in the very midst of that world.

The chairs and the music stands for the orchestra stood expectantly on the platform, which was banked with gay artificial flowers; from behind somewhere came broken bits of melody as the cellos and violins were tuned. The long dim galleries on either side were empty, except of shadows and cobwebs, and perhaps of forgotten music. The chairs had filled, waiters were serving the people at the tables. Everything seemed to be waiting. The members of the orchestra came in and took their seats, the leader of the orchestra was greeted by applause as he took his place and gently tapped his music stand with his baton. Frederica was perfectly happy.

It was a Wagner night. Occasionally the leader made his entire programme from that one man's music. The first number was the "Tannhäuser March," the "Overture," and the "Evening Star." Frederica never moved. She sat leaning forward, absolutely possessed by the power of the music. At the end of the number she turned to Eugene Harden, who had been watching her attention rather than listening himself.

"This is your wine," he said; "be careful!"

She laughed. "Does wine make you feel this way, excited and as though you were going up and up?"

"How intoxicated you are," he said, shaking his head in mock pity.

Then came the "Lohengrin" number, and she forgot him again, forgot everything, and listened with every nerve in her body. Not once did he take his eyes from her, but he was listening, too, now, and was quite as motionless as she.

During the intermission they watched the people walk-

Digitized by Google

ing lazily about the great room, but they did not leave their places. Harden relit his cigar and was lost in thought for a few moments; then he moved his chair toward her side of the little table.

"It is very wonderful," he said. "And I have been listening to it through you. Were you thinking of Elsa?"

"I have never seen the opera."

"Elsa thought she loved a man who came an unknown into her life, and she married him; and then her curiosity made her ask questions which he could not answer—so that it was necessary for him to go away."

"Oh, yes," she said, "I remember now—I have read it. Elsa did not trust him."

"No woman would." He made the assertion as though it were a question.

"I hated her for being suspicious, but I suppose she could not help asking. I suppose it would have been dreadful to live on with that secret between them." She was looking up at the dim shadowy gallery with thoughtful eyes.

Harden leaned back without response; a look of weariness came into his face. She saw that as she brought her eyes and thoughts back to themselves, and she began to color slowly, as though some idea were trickling through her veins.

"Would you be afraid of a secret?" he asked seriously and yet very impersonally.

"I never had any," she answered, trying to misunderstand him.

"If Alec Sloane had a secret, and you knew it when you married him, would you become unhappy and——"

Frederica leaned toward him with a look of anger in her eyes. "Please don't!" she said. "It—it sounds—"

Digitized by Google

She paused, unable to find expression for her displeasure that he should bring Alec so close to her even in conversation. He knew what she meant by the hesitant words.

"I beg your pardon," he said.

The men of the orchestra were again taking their seats, the audience strolled back to their places, and the leader came in and raised his baton. Frederica did not lose herself in the music at once. "Siegmund's Love Song" pressed upon her. She was conscious now that she was listening, and when it came to an end she did not look toward Eugene Harden, nor did he speak to her.

There was only a moment's silence, and then the orchestra began to play the "Ride of the Valkyries." At first the ascent was without excitement, but little by little it grew more impetuous and carried her with it. She felt herself moving, struggling, breathless, to get higher and higher, and feeling that his hand was in hers, that he, too, was being swept upward. She had seen somewhere a picture of one of the Valkyrie riding a white horse, leaping up toward the higher crags of the mountain; and she remembered that the war-woman carried the body of a man killed in battle, holding him lifeless before her. The picture was in her blood. She felt herself strong and vital, astride a horse of Walhalla. But the man was not dead that she carried; there was hope for him if she could bring him to the very top, if she could take one long deep breath instead of breathing harder and harder, as though it were breath that was motion. And it was only a war-woman, a Valkyrie, who could bring a man into the home of the gods. From the wild clamor of the music and her own feelings she heard again the words, "a white horse and silver armor."

Digitized by Google

The end came, and it was as though she had been thrust back and down just before she had reached the summit. Her nostrils were tense, and she did not relax, even though she sat with her hands folded in her lap, a most unusual attitude of quiescence for her. "Wotan's Farewell," and the "Fire-music" came to an end, too, and there was another intermission. As the audience stirred in its places and began to move about the aisles, Harden rose.

"You must not stay longer," he said, bending over Frederica. "If you are too long away from the real world you will *never* go back to it."

She showed her surprise by not moving for a moment. Then she said: "You are not going to stay?" Suddenly she noticed that his hand, as it rested on the ledge of the table was shaking, and that his face was white, a strange dead white, made most noticeable by the black of his hair and brows. "You are sick," she said, and rose quickly.

"No." He smiled with lips that were white, too. "It is of you I am thinking."

Frederica was not used to double meanings, so that it was natural for her to take his words in the simplest sense and believe that he did not think music good for her. Yet she slipped into her jacket and picked up her programme with eyes lowered. He must be feeling sick, she thought, yet he was evidently the sort of man who would not admit it. Suddenly came again the picture of the Valkyrie carrying the man she had saved from death. Frederica hurried toward the door and out into the night air. When they reached the car they were to take, she asked: "Do you feel better?" Her question was timid.

Digitized by Google

His answer was not direct. "You must stay in a real world. I will not take you to another concert."

All the way home they were perfectly silent. Frederica was not embarrassed; she felt that she was helping him, and her body was tense as with an effort to lift a burden.

A half hour later she was sitting before the mirror of her home-made dressing table. The room was so small that she had only room for this table, her cot, her bookshelf, and two chairs. It opened off the kitchen and had a window on the back porch. To-night the light had been turned very low, and as Frederica had stepped over the threshold it seemed a place from which she had been gone a long time. She had turned up the light and seated herself before the mirror to think. It was like talking to a confidante to sit there looking into her own eyes. Her thoughts began at the viaduct and were traveling over their walk, the dinner, the concert, and her home-coming, when some one stepped softly on the back porch.

She was startled, held her breath, and was glad her window shade was down. The steps approached her window, and she heard Maggie Flanagan's voice: "Miss Freda?"

Frederica pulled up the shade and found Maggie's face over the sill. It was red and troubled, the curls on her forehead were little damp rings.

"Miss Freda, I've been waiting for you to come home. You were out so late with him!"

"Is anyone sick?" asked Freda.

"No, no!" said Maggie, reaching her hot hand through the window and putting it on Freda's arm. "Did he make love to you?"

Digitized by Google

"Maggie!" Frederica looked at the face before her in surprise.

"Don't you ever let him make love to you," said Maggie quickly, "nor don't you stay out so late with him again. Good night." She left the window. "I had to see you," she said softly from the steps.

"Maggie, come back," called Frederica; but the girl was already up the Flanagans' steps, and Frederica could hear the sound of Mrs. Flanagan's querulous scolding of her.

Anne in her dressing gown opened the bedroom door. "Did you call, Freda?"

Freda turned with a start from the window. "Yes," she said. "I heard Maggie and I wanted to ask how her mother was."

"Well, that might wait until morning," said Anne. "You scared me." And she went back to bed.

Frederica sat down again before her mirror and stared at herself—she had lied! She had lied! And why?

And what did Maggie mean?

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X

AN IMPORTANT INTERVIEW

IT was two weeks after that night that Frederica met the woman from the Home of Unfortunates.

"You have come to see about Maggie Flanagan?" she said. "Her father sent you."

"Yes, he is feeling very bad, and it is a disgrace to the family. He wants her to be put where she can be watched."

"I don't suppose you are to blame," said Frederica, speaking fast. "You are paid to go out and do such work; but I should think you could have seen what Mr. Flanagan is. You ought to have taken him and locked him up and watched him. I was almost glad when I heard that Maggie had gone away."

The woman stared in amazement.

"Yes, I was," intensified Frederica. "If he feels disgraced he could have let her alone. But he goes to you and cries and says he 'doesn't understand' why this fell on his family!"

Frederica leaned forward and looked the head of the Home of Unfortunates in the eye.

"You understand, don't you?" she said. "You know that if you lived in a house of four rooms with such a father, a sick mother, and seven children—dirty, fighting,

Digitized by Google

crowding—and if you were young and pretty and wanted to be clean—just clean—wanted a place to hang your clothes, a white bed, something fit to eat, and a little rest when you came home from standing behind a counter all day selling pins—you know you would go with the first man that wanted to take you. You couldn't help it. You couldn't!"

Frederica stopped for breath.

"But, Miss Hartwell!"

"Oh, I know," said Frederica. "I know what you are going to say. 'Put her in a home and she will be sorry.' But why should you put her where she must think of the thing that her father says disgraced him—keep her mind just on what happened as a result of all that went before? It is sinful to do that. Maggie is not a bad girl. She worked hard, she gave all her money to her mother. When she came home after work she would try and wash up the house and the children, but what was the use of it? It wasn't two weeks ago she came here to me crying: 'There's going to be another,' she said. Her life couldn't be so fearful anywhere as at home—not anywhere. Why don't you make the father feel ashamed? Why don't you say to everyone you know that it's his sin, and the landlord's sin, and the church's sin, and the law's sin?"

The head of the Home had become adamant. "That is not my work," she said with affronted dignity. "If you will not tell me where Maggie is I shall have to report to her father that I can do nothing."

"That is the very best thing you can do," said Frederica, and the woman left.

Frederica went back into the study, and there in the dining-room door stood Eugene Harden.

Digitized by Google

"Were you in there?" she asked, startled.

"You have Maggie here with you?" he asked.

"Upstairs," answered Frederica. "She came here—afterwards."

Harden walked to the window without speaking. Then he turned. "Where will your heart lead you I wonder—and where will it lead some of us?"

"I had to go to a dreadful place," said Frederica, looking up at him. "If it hadn't been that you had made me feel such things were not the real evils, I—I couldn't have gone."

Harden started and spoke sharply. "Where did you go?" he asked.

Frederica colored slowly. She had not expected to shock him. "Into one of those—houses on Bunker Street. But they were very polite," she added hastily, seeing the unexpected anger rising in his face.

"Why did *you* go?" asked Harden. "Why did you not send some one?"

"I wanted to see Maggie myself and tell her that her father was coming, and that she might as well go with me instead of having a scene with him."

Harden was curious. "How did you know she was there?" he asked.

"I've had Mikey watch. He came running in yesterday and then took me there."

"And who was the man?" asked Eugene.

Frederica shut the door between the dining room and study. "I don't know. She did not want to tell me, and so I have not spoken about him since. She's going to stay with Mrs. Schneider until to-morrow and then I have a place for her to work—a long ways from here."

"Will she do as you wish?" Harden was watching

Digitized by Google

the struggle between Frederica's inexperience and her instinct. He could see that she felt she was proving herself a practical person by taking Maggie's destiny in hand; and he was hoping that she would not have to learn much of human nature in this episode which she was veiling with her own delicacy.

"Maggie loves me and—she was only two days with—away from home."

Two days! Not a long time in Frederica's life, but long enough for the other girl to leave one world and enter another. He went back to what she had first said.

"You told me that something I have said made it possible for you to do this. I didn't know that you ever thought of what I said."

She had been standing while she talked, but now she sat down on the couch, and he seated himself beside her.

"Do you think you could be coming here every day and talk with my father and I wouldn't listen? I think *you* think that I am not capable of understanding, but I understand you much better than he does. All the time you are talking to him you know that he cannot do very much. You do not believe that religion is going to help, but you pretend to, because you want to encourage him, and then"—she paused, looking at the floor a moment—"you get a better chance to study Americans than you would just to be with the workingmen."

There was some defiance in her last sentence, as though she resented his studying her father.

"How else can I learn about Americans?" he asked.

Frederica changed the subject herself this time. "We are going to have a fine night for our meeting," she said, looking out into the day of flying wind and ungentle sunshine.

Digitized by Google

"Are you going?" he asked.

"Of course! Why, I have thought of nothing else for days. All the women in this neighborhood are going."

The meeting to which she looked forward with so much eagerness was being arranged in order to encourage the lumber-yard men who had struck the week before for an eight-hour day, a recognition of the union, and a raise in wages. Harden had told Dr. Hartwell that he had urged the strike for principle more than for direct benefit. He had asked the clergyman to speak at the meeting, too, and Frederica's interest had become a double one. Her sympathies were naturally astir and stimulated by her father's influence in behalf of humanity, and she wanted something to be done for their particular and familiar portion of it. She sat whole afternoons, chin in hand, elbow on knee, listening to her father and Harden discuss the principles and methods of industrial democracy.

Little by little her father was coming to agree with Harden that it might be better to change material conditions before demanding that the individual soul be upright. Yet so far they had never agreed at that point in the discussion where Dr. Hartwell would say: "But we must teach these working people to respect the laws of the land."

And Harden would always answer: "We must change the laws so that they can be respected."

At this point, too, Frederica was likely to break in and ask them how they were going to do either one thing or the other. Dr. Hartwell would say, "By educating them," and Harden, "By rousing their desire for change."

Before the truth had been thrashed out to the satisfaction of the older man, this strike had been called, and

Digitized by Google

Harden had gotten Dr. Hartwell interested in it to such an extent that he had promised to speak at this first meeting. Harden had not asked him what he would say. It was enough that Sloane's friend and salaried missionary should speak from the platform in behalf of the strike, and as the doctor had admitted that the strike was justified, he could be expected to advise the men to hold out for their rights, even though he might clothe his advice in scriptural language.

Eugene was waiting for him to come in that he might inform him of the new facts of the situation; that the whole two thousand men had "come out," and that Sloane was going to try to get non-union men into the yards, but had given his old employees twenty-four hours in which to return before beginning hostilities. Finally, Harden left this information with Frederica and went back to the union headquarters.

She went to the window to watch him go down the street. It seemed very wonderful to her that he should be so interested in the problems of these men. He had not been here three months, and yet he knew more of the men at Sloane's by name than her own father did. Frederica was not impressed by the fact that it was unusual for a man of his type to be concerning himself at all with industrial questions. But neither Frederica nor her father had ever thought of that, nor expressed any curiosity as to his former life.

Anne was the only one who had not yielded to his claim for friendship and coöperation. She was uneasy because he seemed out of place down there; and fancied he might be an adventurer. She was unconsciously jealous, too, because he took so much of Dr. Hartwell's time, and took him away from home so much. But she framed

Digitized by Google

her jealousy in words of disinterested caution. "I know," said she, "you never make inquiries about anyone."

The doctor was sometimes annoyed at Anne's worldliness and conventional suspicions. "It is my religion—a part of my religion—that every man has good in him. I think, Anne, that we are the ones who are influencing Mr. Harden."

"Nonsense," said Anne. "He is teaching all his theories to you and Freda. It may not hurt you, but she is a child in so many things. He is a—fascinating man. He lends you books, she reads them. Why, she talks familiarly of the human race and economic this and industrial that. I should not be surprised if she went on the lecture platform."

But the doctor refused to grow worried, and Anne could find no excuse to bring up the subject again.

As Frederica was leaving the window she caught sight of a young man who was looking for the house numbers. He came up their steps and she went to the door.

"Does Dr. Hartwell live here?" he asked.

"Yes, but he is not at home."

"Perhaps you can tell me what I want to know," he said after a moment's hesitation.

Frederica invited him into the study. She was always hospitable, even to book agents.

"I am from the *Herald*," he said, "and I was sent here to find out about to-night's meeting. I understand Dr. Hartwell is to speak to the strikers."

"Yes?" said Frederica, and waited for him to go on.

"He is friendly to the strikers?" asked the reporter.

"Oh, very," she answered. "They are friends of ours."

"And he believes in the eight-hour day?"

Digitized by Google

Frederica's first opportunity to spread her new gospel had arrived.

"Why, don't you know," she said, "that if there were an eight-hour day all over the country there would be just as much work done as there is now? The men would be fresher and stronger and the spirit of industry would be greater. Besides, it would be just and fair and more truly democratic."

"Are you Dr. Hartwell's daughter?" asked the reporter; his eyes showed admiration of her enthusiasm.

"Yes," she answered.

Evidently he had not cared for her views on the eight-hour day. His next question, however, started her off again. "What does your father think about unions going into politics and having a party of their own?"

"Oh," said Frederica, "the advantage of this country is that everything can be improved through politics —by the ballot. And of course if the workingmen want to improve their conditions they will have to have a party of their own, because the other two parties never put anything into their platform about hours or wages or the ownership of the tools of production."

The reporter looked around the room. "Have you lived here long?" he asked.

"Ten years. It is the most interesting part of Chicago. It is the very heart of it. I wish you could meet some of the people who live around here."

"Do you know the walking delegate, Harden, that has made all the trouble for Sloane?"

Frederica sat up in surprise. "Walking delegate? Why, he isn't a walking delegate!"

"What is he, then? He called this strike."

"He's—he's—" Frederica did not know how to char-

Digitized by Google

acterize him. "He's just a friend of the men; just interested in justice."

"What for?" asked the reporter. "Where did he come from?"

"From Austria, from Vienna," she replied.

"What did he do over there?"

"Oh, I don't know. He didn't like their laws, I think."

"Doesn't seem to like ours either. Is he a workingman?"

"No, indeed," said Frederica. Then she brightened in the possession of an explanation. "He is studying American industries and conditions."

"Well, why did he call the strike—or get some one else to call it? Sloane is one of the fairest employers in the city."

"That's just it," she said. "The men think he will give in and that will affect the other employers."

The reporter rose. "Your father is sure to speak tonight at that meeting?"

"Yes, indeed," she said, and opened the door for him.

It was Frederica's first interview with a newspaper man, and she had no idea of the importance of his questions. Just as he reached the lower step he turned. "Mr. Sloane built that chapel for your father, didn't he?"

"Yes," she answered, and he went down the street.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI

AFTER THE MEETING

WHEN Frederica entered the hall she looked first of all to the stage. There sat her father and Harden with a number of other speakers. They were almost as much hidden behind the thick curtain of tobacco smoke which rose from the main floor of the house as they were behind the fog of public opinion rising all over the city. She went up to the gallery where most of the women were sitting, and from there the crowd of men who had come to listen was a confused mass of black and pink, neutralized and blurred by the smoke. The pink faces bobbed and turned in rising excitement. Waiters carrying four glasses of beer in each hand hurried among the tables at the back. Frederica knew that her father would have been pained had he seen the beer-drinking, and she was glad that he was near-sighted. As for her, beer had subsided into the moral background and was not so important a factor in the problem of evil as it had been.

Anne was feeling greater excitement than Frederica, for she had combated the idea of Dr. Hartwell's speaking at this meeting. She had told him that she thought he ought not to speak out of his pulpit, nor out of his usual religious line of subjects. Having come, however, she preferred to sit down in front of the stage; but the

Digitized by Google

number of men who were crowded there had changed her mind. Both Anne and Frederica were kept bowing and speaking to the people who came into the hall. The door was almost directly under the gallery, and as the men came in they were likely to pause to locate up there some woman member of their family or some woman friend. Those who knew the two women of the Hartwell household were the husbands and fathers of Dr. Hartwell's congregation.

"They speak to us rather condescendingly," said Anne.

"We need it," answered Frederica. "We have chosen to sit above them and look down at them."

Anne was annoyed. Freda's democracy was getting far too personal. But she had no chance to show her annoyance, for at that moment Alec Sloane came up and took the empty chair next her. Mrs. Scanlan and the boy were coming into the gallery from the other side, and Freda was so engrossed in watching them that she did not see Alec. Mrs. Scanlan came and sat next to her and began at once to point out the men of labor prominence on the floor below.

"Scanlan's a great one for knowing everybody," she explained. "Committee's been meetin' at our house. Scanlan says the Mothers ought to join in and fight for the men. He was for goin' himself to-day to talk to 'em. Was it a good meetin'?"

Frederica told her of the meeting. "The Mothers are all here to-night, I think," she said, looking around. Her glance fell upon Alec Sloane. He leaned forward in front of Anne.

"I thought it might be disagreeable for you to be in this crowd without a man," he said.

Digitized by Google

"We have many friends in it," said Frederica. "Besides, they are not wild animals."

Fortunately a German Sing-Verein came forward on the platform for their first number on the programme. Everyone—except the waiters—settled back into attitudes of attention. The singing society was encored and the hall resounded with the "Marseillaise." Voices from every side joined in, and at the close the applause was tremendous.

Alec leaned over to take up the conversation with Frederica. "They sing like wild beasts, anyway."

Frederica, whose heart had been stirred by the song and by the response of the men to its martial call, was offended by his flippant criticism and simply looked at him.

Anne laughed. "Freda is treading on clouds to-night," she said. "You'd better be careful."

The first speaker of the evening was the walking delegate of the lumber workers' union, a little wiry man with a thin voice. He gave an outline of the difficulty facing the union, and spoke without fire or vigor. The other speakers would deal with the justice or the injustice of the lumber workers, he said.

When he sat down Alec looked at Anne. "Noble son of toil, isn't he? Makes his living by the use of his tongue."

Frederica edged over toward Mrs. Scanlan. The meeting was to be spoiled for her by the joking criticism of Alec. She had come with such a sense of its serious meaning, and already a mocking listener had disturbed her. She was afraid, too, that others near them would hear him and think that she and Anne were in the same attitude of raillery.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Scanlan was in a very talkative mood and enjoyed the interruptions more than she did the speaking. She always came to Frederica for the neighborhood news, and to-night she thought that the girl might have some for her about Maggie.

"It's a terrible thing," she said. "Flanagan was tellin' my husband. He cried when he talked about it. He said he thought he knew who the man was, but that Maggie swore on the Bible it wasn't that one, and she wouldn't tell him who it was. I told Scanlan I bet it was one o' the men at the store. Maggie is awful pretty."

Frederica pressed her lips together. She resented this gossip. She made absolutely no reply, and Mrs. Scanlan was encouraged by the silence to a repetition.

"Flanagan's had good luck," she said. "The new foreman at Sloane's has made him night watchman. He gets extra money now for bein' on that beat around the lumber yards. That's the way he happened to stop in at our house, bein' as we're right across from the yards."

Frederica said she was glad. "Mr. Flanagan is a kind man to his family," she said, "and they have an awfully hard time to get along."

A more flamboyant speaker followed the walking delegate. He called to the men to make the union a great success by winning this strike for the eight-hour day. "Don't wait for the rest to begin to fight next May," he said, "but be the first to get a human work day for the human being." Whenever he came out with some union principle he paused and the crowd broke into applause.

"He ain't much good," whispered Mrs. Scanlan, "but he's way up in the Knights o' Labor and they has to put him on the programme. Scanlan's workin' to get another

Digitized by Google

man for his place. There's politics in these things, more'n you'd think, to hear 'em all talkin' from the same platform."

Alec had turned in his seat so that he could watch Frederica. He seemed to have forgotten the speaker, and to be thinking deeply. His gaze was even harder to bear than his conversation. She was doubly glad when her father rose to talk. She heard Anne breathe deeply, and was surprised that she should be so much excited. But a glance at Anne's face revealed the reason for it. For the first time Frederica realized the romance that had been going on so close to her. There was no mistaking the light in Anne's eyes and the quiver of her lips. Frederica was glad that Alec was looking at her and so was not likely to share the discovery. She sat apparently listening to her father's opening remarks; but in reality she did not hear a word. She was fighting her first jealousy. Anne loved her father!

She tried to think whether she had any reason to believe that her father loved Anne. In her mind she renewed all the small episodes of their life. The most important was Anne's eagerness for her to marry Alec. So that was the reason the marriage was desirable? And her father's approval of Anne's eagerness. He probably wished her out of his home, too—yet, jealous as she was, she could not bring herself to believe that. But she began to feel the strongest antagonism against the woman sitting next to her. What right had Anne to come into their home and win her father's love? Yet, had she won his love? The confusion of emotion and facts stranded her, and she was forced to come back to her surroundings. There stood her father talking to a big audience of workingmen; and he had done it in spite of Anne's protests.

Digitized by Google

That was some comfort. The thought followed, too, that he was there because of Eugene Harden's influence.

Dr. Hartwell was warming to his subject. He was telling the story of Gideon, telling with great earnestness and without theology how that champion of the Israelites had made use of noise to win a victory. "The camp of the Midianites was in darkness as great as the darkness which prevails over the camps of Capitalism to-day."

Alec leaned in front of Anne to catch Frederica's attention. "I didn't expect to hear your father talking like that," he said.

Frederica made a sign for him to be still. "I did," she whispered shortly.

Dr. Hartwell approached his conclusion. All the way through his address he had been interrupted by bursts of applause. The audience, suspicious at first, had become trustful. Now quite without warning the clergyman adopted the pulpit manner and appealed to them to heed his advice. He had perfect attention.

"I want you to show a Christian spirit," he said—"the spirit of meekness and lowliness. I want you to set an example not only to your fellows who are watching you so closely, but to the whole world. I want you to arbitrate this strike. Arbitration is the noble, the peaceable, the grand way of settling your difficulties. I call upon you in the name of God to make use of the opportunity which has come to you and prove yourselves Christians. Arbitrate!"

When he sat down the applause was very weak. All the enthusiasm which he had stirred was chilled by his return to the religious phraseology, and to the unpopular tenet of arbitration.

Frederica's heart sank. It was as though her father

Digitized by Google

had blown out his light, hidden his trumpet, and carefully set the pitcher where it could not break. She knew that there would be no confusion in the camp of the enemy as a result of his address. In the midst of her embarrassment that the applause was so weak, Alec spoke again.

"Your father's all right," he said. "He gives them the sort of thing they like up to a certain point, and then he lets them have a bit of good advice."

Alec seemed to expect her to join in this praise, but she looked at him without any approval in her face. Anne had relaxed and was leaning back. Frederica thought that probably she was relieved as Alec was about her father's conclusion. She wished she was not sitting anywhere near them, and she turned to Mrs. Scanlan.

"I suppose your husband doesn't want arbitration, does he?" she asked.

Mrs. Scanlan was embarrassed in her answer. "If your father'd ever been a union man he'd see it ain't no good to arbitrate, at least not until they've got the bosses in a corner. But your father talks interestin'. It's the first time I've heard him, as I can't go to hear him Sundays."

The Sing-Verein was lifting the roof with another song, and conversation was impossible. Frederica watched the waiters, whose hands were still full of beer glasses. Men were standing in groups about the sides of the hall; the smoke was thicker than ever. She saw Eugene Harden talking to the man next him on the platform, and she wondered whether he was disappointed in her father's address to the wage laborers.

When the song was at its lusty end the chairman rose to introduce the next speaker. Frederica knew that Alec

Digitized by Google

was watching her, so she tried to look indifferent. But when Harden rose, she felt the color come into her face in spite of the determination to hide her interest.

He looked taller and broader-shouldered standing there than he ever had in her father's study. He was the most distinguished-looking man she had ever seen, and in this gathering of toilers he looked of another sphere. She wondered if the audience felt his distinctness from them as he let his glance range through the rows of men before him. His look reached the gallery and she wished that he could see her through the smoke. It was this moment of pause before he began to speak that gave him his first hold upon the audience, which grew very quiet waiting for his first words. Frederica held her breath.

Harden spoke very simply and with a realization of his audience's multiple characteristics, coming as these men did from all over Europe. He spoke to them as though they were Americans and he a stranger visiting them. He told them that he had believed in the American principles, in the Declaration of Independence, until he had arrived in this country. But that now he began to doubt the strength of the American feeling. He voiced for them any bitterness which they might be feeling, and expressed more fully than they could possibly have done the disillusionment of the European who had come with dreams to the land of promise.

But when he had expressed all that, he turned to them as to American citizens, and called upon them to win back the truth of these principles of democracy and justice. In so speaking he allowed them no loophole of escape from their responsibilities, and for that reason his talk had more patriotism in it than any native-born American could have expressed. There would be direct

Digitized by Google

results from what he said because he crystallized their half-wavering thoughts into clear and definite purpose. His manner of speech was slow and easy, as though he was thinking as he went along, and as though they already knew what he was saying and he was only repeating these words to them that they might freshen their memories. He was interrupted many times by applause, but it spoke well for the spirit of hope and optimism that the applause was greater when he called upon them to stand for justice and democracy than it was in the first part of his talk, when he was expressing his doubt of Americans' sincerity.

The applause lasted so long that the men of the Sing-Verein seemed only to be making mouths as they stood there. Little by little, however, their voices rose above the clapping of hands and Frederica heard with amazement that they were singing "My country 'tis of thee."

"By Jove," said Alec to Anne, "he must have told them to do that. He's a wizard!"

"Yes," said Anne, rising, "there's something very strange about him."

Frederica heard her, but she could not trust herself to speak. She followed Anne and Alec without knowing where she was. The sound of Harden's voice was in her ears. The power he had held over the audience had been for her the final draught of his personality, and it had intoxicated her. The magnetic vitality which had encompassed the several hundred listeners had embraced her and drawn her so close to him as he stood there that she could almost feel the touch of his hand on hers. She kept her eyes on the floor as she passed along the gallery and down the stairs. She did not want to look into anyone's face until she looked into his.

Digitized by Google

Outside the door her father was waiting for them. "Harden is detained," he said.

And the moment of Frederica's abandonment to joy was over, for she was not to see him to-night—and to-morrow? The word "to-morrow" in her thoughts made a cold shiver run through her. She was afraid of to-morrow. What did it hold? What might it take from her or give to her?

Anne and her father went on ahead and that left her to walk with Alec. They did not talk while they were in the crowd of people leaving the hall, but when they had left Halsted Street Alec came closer to her and said: "Let the others go on a little, I want to talk to you."

Frederica, instead of doing as he wished, hurried her steps so as not to be out of earshot of her father and Anne.

"I am very tired," she said, "and I must go home quickly."

Alec put his hand on her arm and pulled her in spite of herself into a slower gait.

"I know you're tired," he said. "You don't look well, and I've made up my mind to take you out of this altogether. We can do just as much good if we live out of town, and you won't be so thin and white."

Frederica did not know what to say. He had not made the sort of a proposal she would have expected. He had not said anything about love or marriage, but had spoken as though it were all settled, and the only point to be discussed was whether or not she would live out of town.

"I've spoken to your father and Miss Forester, and they want you—to be sensible."

He was putting his suit in this impersonal way because he was afraid of seeming sentimental to her; and

Digitized by Google

she was indignant at the mention of her father and Anne. It was like a conspiracy.

"I hate Anne Forester!" she said unexpectedly both to herself and to him. "I hate her because she wants to get rid of me and marry my father!"

Alec stopped short on the street crossing where they were. "She does?" he ejaculated. "I didn't know that!" After a pause he added: "Well, why not? She practically takes care of both of you now. So Miss Anne's in love!" He laughed under his breath.

Although Frederica saw that she had for the moment at least changed the subject of his thoughts, she was sorry she had spoken. "Don't please ever let anyone know I said that!" she appealed frankly to Alec. "I ought not to have said it—I—I may be mistaken."

"I think you're right, though," replied Alec. "And I like the idea. Your father's not old, and she's just the one for him—and she's got money."

It was Frederica who stopped now in surprise. "Alec Sloane!"

He guessed her criticism. "Not that your father would ever think of that, but it will help—his work. And my money will help your work."

They were within a few blocks of her home now, and Alec turned to her with decision. "When will you marry me, Freda?" His voice trembled and his forehead was moist with the knowledge that he had put it squarely, and that she would have to answer squarely.

She did. "Never, Alec," she said.

They walked on in silence. She heard some one walking behind them, and she was glad because it would keep Alec from saying anything more. But she was mistaken, for he paid no attention to the fact that there might be

Digitized by Google

a listener. He forgot, too, his reticence and any fear of seeming sentimental.

"I have always thought you would marry me," he said. "It isn't fair, Freda; for I've never looked at any other girl, and I've been planning ever since I began to think about such things to have you for my wife. You knew that—and you let me come to your house with my mind set on it. If you had ever gone out with other fellows, or —flirted, why, I would have felt differently. But you haven't."

His words came fast and rather loud. Her father and Anne were ahead and just going up the steps of the house. Frederica felt she had to say something.

"I'm sorry," she said, "but I can't help it. I didn't really think about marrying."

"It's that damned Austrian!" said Alec.

Frederica turned on him, but her words stayed on her lips. Harden himself was there—it was he who had been behind them.

"I want to give these papers to your father," he said, ignoring Sloane, and going up the steps.

"Good night," said Frederica to Alec, and went into the house, and straight to her room. She had no wish to see Eugene that night—nor ever, she thought. She undressed with the gas turned very low, for she did not want to catch any glimpse of herself in the mirror.

As she put out the light and pulled up the shade at the window, she saw the Flanagans' house dark and quiet, and that made her think of Maggie upstairs with Mrs. Schneider.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII

HER FATHER'S DECISION

FREDERICA could not go to sleep, but lay straight and motionless in her narrow bed. There had been more horror in the mystery of Maggie's behavior than she had realized until the night came on. That morning when she had met the world-old problem as it asserted itself in the shame-faced little Irish friend trembling in a strange room in a house worse than strange, Frederica had asked herself and asked again what it was that terrified her. Then when the joy of the evening had swept through her as she sat in the hall, she had felt that she was approaching a knowledge of sex which was, after all, to be beautiful, and was to reveal her terror simply as ignorance. But when Alec had tried to make her marriage to him seem as a matter of course, she had swung to the far end of dismay again. To cap it all was the mortification of Eugene's having heard Alec's jealousy. Every girl is a nun in cloister until she has some decision to make. If there be no decision, no problem which requires solution, then she may drift into the inner sanctuary of love before she knows whether or not it is a place to be dreaded.

If Eugene Harden had not come, Frederica would probably have drifted into marriage with Alec, taking it for granted that her acquiescence and lack of repulsion be-

Digitized by Google

tokened the marriage as right and natural. But at the very first touch of Harden's hand upon hers she had begun to awaken. She did not know that her trembling pleasure in his presence was her body's song of love. It had needed this day's experience to prove to her that she was quivering with the wish to love him.

There in the dark she lay, her head quiet upon the pillow, but with thoughts in it which were going round and round; her little hands with burning palms pressed against the bed; and her heart beating irregularly as she thought now of this and now of that episode of the day. Could she ever face Eugene again, or look at Alec? And how could she be of service to Maggie now?

Physical birth, the first inevitable fact of human existence, is attended with anxiety and care; but the birth of the individual, at the time when he becomes self-conscious as a man or a woman, is ignored, disregarded, left to silence. The boy struggling in his own mind with the problem of passion, the girl with closed eyes before the facts of sex, fearing, hoping, tremulous—these are left to themselves. Herod's slaughter of the innocents was not so great a crime as that of those who leave children in the dark and let them struggle alone through a second birth. And many are born dead.

Frederica lay wakeful in the very dawn of experience. Love? There was Maggie and the unknown lover; she felt fear before that idea of love. There was Alec offering wealth and marriage; she felt repelled at the thought, even though she did not go in imagination as far as the touch of his hand. There was Anne and her father; she was embarrassed, blushed all over her body at the mere thought of her father as a lover. And there was what she felt for Eugene Harden—a great eagerness to

Digitized by Google

be in the room with him, to hear him talk—she could not analyze what she felt nor put it into words to herself, nor did she for a moment think of him as having any feeling for her, nor any interest even. Had he been a creature of her imagination solely, he could not have been more absolutely unresponsive to her in her own mind.

So many thoughts and feelings pressed upon her as she lay there that finally there was a reaction. Perhaps to-morrow she would find she had been dreaming. Perhaps Maggie would greet her laughingly from the Flanagans' steps; perhaps Alec would be just as usual, and perhaps—She fell asleep, but so lightly that she did not believe she had slept at all.

When she wakened the day was beginning. She tried to foresee what would happen. What way was there to meet Mr. Harden? Should she apologize? That was impossible. Was she master of herself enough to ignore what Alec had said? She must try to do that. She pictured him coming into the room. For one thing she would not be in the room when he came, but come in after the conversation was well begun.

That thought in the dark led to another: probably Mr. Harden would be disappointed in the way her father had spoken, and would not care to come over to see him. Frederica found herself frightened at that. Suppose she were never to see him again! She sat up in bed and reached out her arms in the dark. "Eugene! Eugene!" she said aloud. It was the first time she had ever used his name even to herself. She had talked to him in her thoughts as "Mr." Harden.

Well, and if Alec came? She decided she would rush out of the house if he came. There was nothing more to be said or done as far as he was concerned. He would

Digitized by Google

go to her father and to Anne for their aid in his suit. Then with the thought of Maggie and her intention to go with her to Mrs. Parrish, who had telephoned the day before that she wanted a young girl to train in housework, Frederica got up.

It was a dark day, and at half-past six she had to light the gas to see to get dressed. With the first flicker of it the room looked to her as it had the night before, and she sat down on the edge of the bed shivering. Her little white and blue room had become hatefully strange to her, and she did not know why.

She dressed quickly and went into the kitchen, which had the cold gray look a kitchen always has when you enter it at an unexpectedly early hour. The oldest Schneider boy had not come yet to make the fire, so she made it herself, rather glad to touch kindling and rattle coal. When it was roaring she began to make muffins for breakfast, but suddenly remembered that it would be an hour before anyone was ready to eat them. She went into the study and dusted it more thoroughly than usual; arranged the room with the idea of Harden's coming into it. The familiar books and pictures and furniture looked exceedingly time-worn this morning; they were almost gloomy. When her eye fell upon the photograph of her mother she gave a sort of sob.

It was only seven o'clock, and there was nothing more to do that could be done then, so she went to the front door and took in the morning paper and went back to the kitchen to read it. Now that the kitchen had in it the sounds of a teakettle boiling, Frederica found it more cheerful and sat down in a chair by the window.

Almost the first thing her eyes fell on was the headline: "Well-known Clergyman Comes Out for Socialism." The

Digitized by Google

column underneath the heading held an account of the meeting. One paragraph was given to the effect of Socialist propaganda upon the strikers in Sloane's lumber yards. Another paragraph was devoted to the growth of the propaganda in the Knights of Labor. Then followed what purported to be a report of Dr. Hartwell's speech, in which he was quoted as saying that there could be no truce between Capital and Labor, no compromise, and as for arbitration—that belonged to the past. He was quoted as concluding his remarks by saying that he would stand by the workingmen in this strike, as in all others, until they had achieved their rights. No mention, except a passing one, was made of the other speakers. Frederica's astonishment melted into relief. After all, her father was credited with the stand she had wanted him to take. She hoped Harden would read the paper and realize, as she did, that people in general would be impressed with her father's position.

Although far from cheerful, she began the muffins with a lighter heart. And when Anne came into the kitchen breakfast was almost ready, a most unusual occurrence; and Frederica was moving about in a serious, distant way which was without explanation, until Anne remembered the girl's experiences the day before with Maggie. She spoke of that.

"I wish I had known, Freda, what you intended doing yesterday. I should have gone for Maggie myself. It has almost made you sick. You look like a ghost."

Frederica made no response, except that she was glad she had not told her. "Maggie felt better with me, I think," she said. And they made no other reference to the girl.

At breakfast Dr. Hartwell took up his paper, which

Digitized by Google

lay folded as usual by his plate. It was his one masculine prerogative, to read undisturbed while he drank his coffee and ate his oatmeal. Frederica watched him closely as he began to read. For some reason she had not spoken of the article confronting him. She saw him start with surprise and then read hurriedly. When he looked up—not at her, but at Anne—she saw that he was white with anger. Never before had she seen him angry. And now he was showing anger over what had pleased her. It would have been natural for him to be annoyed, but to hear his voice tremble when he first spoke.

"Do you suppose that was done maliciously?" he asked, giving the paper to Anne.

Frederica felt hurt to be left so completely out of the question, but it was too serious a matter to pretend ignorance of. "There's nothing malicious about it, father," she said.

"You've read it?" he asked quickly.

"Yes."

"Did you know it was to appear?"

"Of course not."

"Harden was urging me yesterday to come out definitely on his side—to make use of the opportunity to take a stand for his principles."

"But you told him you wouldn't?" said Anne.

"No." Dr. Hartwell was trying to recall his exact words. "I told him he could rely on me to say the right thing."

"Then, he probably *did* give this as what you would say, for there is only one 'right' to him," said Anne aggressively. She was growing more indignant as she realized that this was just what she would have predicted.

Digitized by Google

"It would have been a lie. He could not have done that," said Frederica.

Dr. Hartwell was rereading the article, but he looked up at Frederica. "You have heard him say that in war the lie was one of the weapons."

"But he never said he would use it."

With a queer look Anne was stirring her coffee. "I noticed when he was here after the meeting that he seemed quite unlike himself—I mean unlike the person he has always pretended to be."

Frederica shrank against her chair. She was quite sure she knew the reason for his appearance, but of course she could say nothing about that. Anne and her father were discussing the article, paragraph by paragraph, comparing it with what the doctor had actually said. Frederica could eat no breakfast; the muffins had not been touched by any of them. She began to clear the table with a certain aloofness from the two. She did not know that her father, realizing how much she believed in Harden, felt for the first time antagonism in her attitude, and turned instinctively to Anne, who had warned him this long time not to take up any of the industrial questions. Once, as she came in from the kitchen, she heard her father say:

"What makes me most annoyed is that I saw Sloane yesterday afternoon and had actually persuaded him to arbitrate, had worked him up to that point, so that he said as I left that if by speaking to the men at the meeting on the subject, I succeeded in getting them, I could count on him. Now—of course when he sees this he will think—well, I don't know what he'll think."

Frederica put her hands on the table and leaned

Digitized by Google

against it. "I think, father, that he is too good a friend to suspect you of lying—as you are suspecting Mr. Harden."

The repression in her voice and the white of her face startled Anne, who suddenly felt they were making too much of the whole affair.

"You can explain it easily enough," she said. "Mr. Sloane has known you so long."

Frederica looked across at her father. "Of course that is what you ought to have said." She pointed to the paper.

"My child, I am afraid Mr. Harden has been influencing you too decidedly," said her father. "You ought to use your judgment—consider both sides of every question."

Frederica did not feel equal to a discussion, so she withdrew to the kitchen, leaving Anne to give any comfort her father needed. Under all her dismay and disappointment was the sense that it was wicked for her to criticise her father in any respect. She had believed in him so absolutely until now. She could not bring herself to admit that it was an outsider's influence that had come between them. Until last night at the meeting she had believed that her father and she were accepting in the same spirit the doctrines Harden had preached to them in the doctor's study. When the dishes were washed, she took the glasses and silver into the dining room. They still sat there, and Dr. Hartwell was saying:

"Anne, you must remember that I have promised him the use of the chapel to-night."

"Under the circumstances," said Anne, "he cannot expect you to overlook this thing. You are justified in telling him that he cannot make use of your position and

Digitized by Google

influence. I should send word to him at once that he cannot have it. He needs the rebuke."

Frederica waited motionless to see if Anne's advice was to be followed. The doctor meditated.

"No," he answered after a moment. "No. I cannot do that. I shall let him speak, for I have promised. But I shall take the occasion to explain this." He took his knife and cut the column from the paper.

If Eugene Harden came this morning, Frederica realized that the conversation would be embarrassing, and there might be a break between him and her father. So underneath her desire to see him was the dread of his coming. Suddenly she remembered Maggie. It was time to go to Mrs. Parrish's, and it was probable that she would be gone several hours and miss Harden's call if for any reason he came in the morning. He was likely to come, because there were preparations to be made at the chapel.

Nevertheless, she put on her things and went up to the Schneiders' to get Maggie, who was all ready and waiting to go. The nearness of her own home had worried the girl, for she was afraid to face her father. They went out the front door, followed to the threshold by Mrs. Schneider, who had been a friend in need.

Maggie was a little shorter than Frederica, and glanced up at her every now and then. "You're in trouble, Miss Freda," she said, as they got on the car to go to the North Side.

Frederica looked at her and smiled. "I'm thinking about you."

"Thinking what you're goin' to say to her, I s'pose," said Maggie timidly.

"I'm not going to say anything, Maggie, except that

Digitized by Google

you are a friend of mine and want to learn to do housework."

Maggie's heart jumped within her. How she had dreaded that interview with Mrs. Parrish, in which Miss Freda would tell of what had happened! Yet she had made up her mind to stand it, just to show Frederica that she was anxious to do what was asked of her. To be certain that she was not mistaken, she asked:

"Shouldn't you tell her I've lost my character?" Her lips trembled and her cheeks flushed, but her long-lashed eyes looked straight into Frederica's.

"You haven't," said Frederica shortly, for she was not equal to saying more at the moment.

"I want to be honest with her"—Maggie was determined to get absolute assurance—"and I wouldn't want you to say it behind my back."

Frederica turned to her to explain. "Don't you see, Maggie, she doesn't have to know about your whole life to make you a good housekeeper? It isn't any business of hers what you have done. You were unhappy, weren't you?" Frederica looked questioningly at the face beside her.

Maggie dropped her eyes. "I was scared we'd be found out," she said. "I could ha' stood everything else I guess."

Frederica said nothing more. It was all too confusing. Down in her heart she believed Maggie still loved the man, and she did not dare ask. She would not have wanted anyone to ask her if she loved Eugene Harden. If it were none of Mrs. Parrish's business to know of Maggie's life, it was none of hers to pry into Maggie's secret. So quickly had Frederica learned of her own heart that love is a sacredly personal thing.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Parrish was not at home when the two girls got there, but had left word with the housekeeper for Maggie to go to the room ready for her, and to wait. Frederica went, too, into the servants' part of the house and saw that each had a well-kept room. The one given to Maggie was not smaller than her own. There were several religious pictures on the walls and some growing plants in the window. She began to think better of Mrs. Parrish. Maggie was too surprised for speech. Never in her life, in her most imaginative moments, had she dreamed of this. She looked around at everything with a new light in her eyes. And when Frederica started to go, she threw her arms about her neck and kissed her cheek.

"I guess this *is* better," she said, as though up to that moment she had been undecided.

The housekeeper took Frederica downstairs with an air of condescension. After all, if this young woman had allowed that Irish girl to kiss her so heartily, she could not be anybody. But Frederica never noticed the condescension; she was too eager to get back home.

Harden was not there when she entered her father's study, and as her father seemed to have been at work without interruption since her departure, she took it for granted that he had not been there at all. And she found it impossible to ask.

Dr. Hartwell put down his pen. "When you get your things off, Freda, I want to talk to you."

She threw her hat and coat on the couch and sat down, feeling rather faint, and remembering that she had eaten no breakfast.

"I am preparing a statement for the paper," he said. "I shall read it to-night at the chapel meeting, and it

Digitized by Google

will appear to-morrow morning. I want you to read it now and see if I have said everything I should."

"Has Anne read it?" asked Freda.

"Not yet. Anne has not followed our discussions as closely as you have," he replied.

In her quick gratitude that she was not being excluded from his confidence, Frederica was almost in a mood to agree with what he had written. He handed the sermon-like manuscript to her, and watched her while she read. As he looked at her his mind wandered to Alec Sloane and the possibility of Frederica's changing her attitude toward marriage with him. Just the faintest suspicion that Harden might be an influence unfavorable to this plan crossed his mind.

Frederica had finished the last page of the explanation. Trouble lay in her eyes, and she looked earnestly at him. "I wish you wouldn't," she said.

Dr. Hartwell stiffened. "Wouldn't what, Freda?"

"I wish you would not explain—not try to explain. You know the men are in the right in this strike; that their work can be done in eight hours; that Mr. Sloane ought to grant all the things they ask. And you ought to tell him that instead of apologizing."

Dr. Hartwell tried to be patient with her. "You don't understand, Freda. This is a test strike. If the men win, all the trades in the city will strike."

"That would be splendid," said Freda.

"But Mr. Sloane cannot afford to be the first one to yield. It would hurt him with the other lumber men."

"But if his employees are in the right, he ought not to think of himself."

Her father showed exasperation. "I don't think you grasp these problems very well, Frederica. I don't know,"

Digitized by Google

he added, "that there is any reason you should. Your work is with the women and children. You must try and make them happy, show them the light."

"I am trying," said Frederica with a little defiance in her voice. "I told all the mothers yesterday to stand by the strikers; and they were all at the meeting last night, and they applauded Mr. Harden's speech."

Dr. Hartwell winced, and then lost his temper. "I wish that man had never come to this house," he said.

Fortunately Anne called them to lunch just then, and asked about Mrs. Parrish and Maggie. And afterwards Anne induced Frederica to take a nap, and exhaustion made her sleep heavily. Nothing had really happened *to* her; it had all happened *within* her. She slept heavily until after five o'clock. When she awakened she could not tell where she was nor what was happening. There were voices in the kitchen, but it was only Anne talking to Mrs. Flanagan, who had come over for the daily comfort which she seemed to require since Maggie had left home. Frederica heard her querulous voice and Anne's soothing replies. Suddenly she heard the front door slam.

In haste she brushed her hair and slipped on her gray dress, the most unbecoming one she had, but she could not bear to wear the one she had worn to the meeting. She fastened her collar and cuffs with jerky, uncertain fingers. It might be that Eugene Harden was in the study, and he might not stay long. With only a word to Mrs. Flanagan, who sat by the stove, she went through the kitchen, into the dining room, and then paused again. The door into the study was open, but there were no voices. She went in and found her father alone, standing in the dusk at the window. The door, then, had

Digitized by Google

slammed *after* him and not at his arrival. It was as though some one had lied to her.

"Who was it went out?" she asked.

"Mr. Sloane," answered Dr. Hartwell, leaving the window.

Anne came in, complaining of Mrs. Flanagan's protracted visit, but received no consolation. Dr. Hartwell sighed heavily. "I suppose he is right," he said.

"Who?" asked Anne, always afraid of the doctor's trustfulness.

"Sloane says Harden cannot speak in the chapel tonight."

"I knew he'd feel that way," said Anne. "And no doubt Alec told him what Mr. Harden said last night at the hall."

"Sloane thinks there was no doubt of his having given that report to the papers."

"Well, I think so, too," said Anne, "since he has never come near us all day."

Frederica from the far end of the room asked her father what he had said to Mr. Sloane.

"There was but one thing to say, Freda."

Frederica waited.

"I told him his wishes should be considered."

"You are going to ask Mr. Harden not to speak tonight?" asked Anne, and voiced Frederica's silent question.

"That is the only thing to do," replied Dr. Hartwell. "He will understand my position."

"What is your position?" interrupted Frederica, coming forward as though to confront her father.

"Mr. Sloane made it quite plain," said Dr. Hartwell, with a slight resentment showing for the first time in his

Digitized by Google

voice. He went to his desk and sat down in the manner customary to him when he had reached the concluding paragraph of his sermon and knew that it must be written before he rose. "Mr. Sloane," he repeated, "made it quite plain that my continued use of the chapel depended upon my decision not to lend it to—other speakers."

Anger shone white in Frederica's face. "And you are dependent on him," she said. "You get your salary from him."

"You have always known that!" said her father irritably.

"No," replied the girl. "I have not always known it. I have learned it just now. Why didn't you tell him he could have his chapel—that you would do with it what you wished or leave it empty?"

Anne spoke into the discussion. "Don't get wrought up, Freda. When you're calmer you will see that your father has done the right thing."

Frederica was glad that the room was not light enough to see distinctly, for she was conscious that she was showing her excitement. She seemed to be the only one of the three who believed in Eugene Harden. And her father was about to acknowledge to a man in whom he disbelieved that that man's principles were being exemplified. She knew that when her father mentioned Mr. Sloane in connection with the chapel Harden would repeat to himself what he had often said to them, that wage slavery was not limited to the day laborer.

Besides, there was the humiliation for her father, who, although he had not admitted it, must be embarrassed at the idea of withdrawing a promise and proving himself an economic dependent upon a rich man. As that thought

Digitized by Google

came to her, Frederica went over to where he was sitting at the desk and leaned over his shoulder to kiss him. It was a new and disagreeable experience for her to be feeling sorry for her father; but she recognized even as she put her lips on his forehead that she had become much older, and was even older than he in some respects. Dr. Hartwell felt a difference in her attitude, and it flashed across his memory that that was the sort of patient, forbearing kiss his wife used to give him at the end of some of their discussions. At the same time he was too much relieved that there was to be no open disagreement to disclaim this tenderness. He put his arm about Frederica and changed the subject.

"Sloane says that that man we sent to him—that Lange, is a fine fellow. He has made him a foreman."

It was not a happy change of subject after all, for it recalled the queer presence of the man who had come in that night. She had seen him several times lately going or coming from the Schneiders'. She loosed herself from her father's arm and went to the window; it was not yet dark. Going into the kitchen, as her father supposed, to see about supper, she went on into her own room, put her things on, and slipped out the back door and down the steps into the dusky twilight.

The half-past five whistles were blowing, and when she reached Twelfth Street the crowds of men were coming over from the South Side. But to-night there was no comfort in the sight of them. She met them without looking at them; and those who looked at her saw a slight figure hurrying with intent eyes and fast-coming breath. One or two looked after her, and one turned and followed her, but far enough behind so that she could not know it.

Digitized by Google

When she came to Michigan Avenue she turned north and walked the half mile to the Leland Hotel. As she entered the door the man who was following went straight on, crossed the street, and sat down on the curbing opposite to wait.

She approached the desk and asked for Mr. Harden. The clerk looked at her in surprise when she said she would go right to his room. Something in her face made him think of illness or death, and he sent one of the boys up to Harden's suite with her. Frederica had asked to go to Harden's room because she did not know where else to go. She had never been in hotels and knew nothing of their parlors nor of their conventions. Her heart almost choked her when at the boy's knock she heard Harden say, "Come in." The boy had opened the door, Frederica stepped in, and it closed behind her.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII

AN ACKNOWLEDGED TEMPTATION

AN hour before the arrival of Frederica, Eugene Harden was already dressed for dinner, and was waiting for a Viennese friend of his who was in the adjoining room singing an air of a Strauss waltz, and occasionally ejaculating in his mother tongue while he finished his toilet. He came into the room where Harden sat at his desk, and turning the light up, went over to the long glass and tried again to arrange his tie to his own satisfaction. He was a short blond man, dapper and over-refined physically. His pointed blond beard, his sharp blue eyes, his hair, which grew into a point upon a rather low forehead, gave him the look of a society satyr. One would have expected to find pointed ears. At any rate they were sharp.

"It is a thing mysterious to me," he said, his back turned to Harden, his attention apparently upon his own appearance, "a thing most mysterious—my devotion to you. I have been one week in this barbaric place; I see you only at dinner and then you are somewhere else in your thoughts." He leaned forward and scrutinized the lapel of his coat as it was reflected in the glass, to see if the perfume he had sprinkled upon himself had made any spots. "I will not go to your meetings, Eugene"—he gave the name its French pronunciation. "I do not

Digitized by Google

love your masses." He turned daintily upon one heel and faced Harden, who was writing busily and paying absolutely no attention to these complaints. "Why should I be so devoted—for what? I—have—not—yet—met—one—rich—American—girl. I came when I read in the paper that you were engaged to——"

Eugene Harden raised his head. "I told you that was an unpleasant subject," he said.

"But I thought," went on Hochberg—"I knew of course that it was only rumor—that under the circumstances you would not be so rash even in this land of freedom. But I hoped that I might perhaps be the one to console her. I am not a bad fellow to play Mephistopheles to your Faust. But I find you have but one mistress—the mob. You defend the mob as you would your wife's honor"—Hochberg touched the point of his beard daintily with fingers tipped with pink nails—"and neither one has honor—nor—reason."

Harden pushed back his chair and rose to go down to dinner. "You know," he said, "that I dislike your flippancy on that subject."

Hochberg shrugged his shoulders with the air of a society villain in the melodrama. "One woman deceives you—but all the rest are angels. You have no logic!" He looked at his watch. "But now let us go down to the place of uneatable food. The soup of the barbarian grows cold."

Harden paused. "I will be down directly," he said. "I must send a note to Dr. Hartwell, telling him that I shall be late to his meeting."

Hochberg paused on the threshold. "And that transcendental—ethereal follower of your ideals—will she be there?"

Digitized by Google

"I do not know," said Eugene shortly.

"I think, perhaps, Eugene"—Hochberg drawled his words as though to signify meditation—"I think perhaps I shall go to hear you speak."

"I would rather not," said Eugene.

With his hand on the door Hochberg looked down at the point of his shoe. "Love has so many masks, but this of yours—it is most original. A common aim—the uplifting of humanity"—he waved his hand as a première danseuse would toss dainty kisses to the first row—"the freeing of men from the hateful yoke of industrial slavery." Then rising on his toes, and making a bow with arms spread outwards, "Beneath the filmy shade of telegraph poles she passed her shadow fingers over the blunders he had made in his manuscript—the manuscript of a book which was to show the world how great are the down-trodden—how the worm is to rise upon its tail—how the insects who would have been kept by kind nature beneath the rocks are to blink in the sunshine. Ah"—he opened the door—"I revel in this new dream of love!"

As the door closed behind him Harden sat down to write his note, but for some moments he was perfectly motionless and his face was white. Mephisto had pricked deep.

There was a knock at the door, and when Harden called "Come in," somewhat irritated at this further delay of his dinner, Alec Sloane came in. As Harden rose and looked at him questioningly Alec came forward and stopped in front of him.

"I have come," he said, "to apologize for last night. I did not know what I was saying, and I thought that I ought to come and beg your pardon." He spoke very

Digitized by Google

direct, and his face was lighted with the determination to do a thing which was very hard, but was very necessary.

Harden came forward and put out his hand. "You need say nothing. Had I heard anything it would have been my own fault. If I did not hear, you need not apologize."

"But I want to say something else," said Alec, the light dying out of his face, for now he was on questionable ground. "It is not the sort of thing we do in this country, but perhaps you are used to it, and it won't seem so odd. But I came to ask you to tell me if you were going to ask Frederica to marry you."

A look as hard as steel came into the Austrian's eyes; his long silence was apparently due to his struggle for self-control. "I—I am not used to being questioned. I had thought that in this country—" It was impossible for him to continue.

"As long as I told you that I knew it was unusual to speak of it," said Alec, biting his lips, "you cannot think me a cad for having done so."

Harden paced the floor before he responded. "It is my privilege that I need not discuss my affairs with anyone. If at any time I can be of any service to you in other than so delicate a matter, I hope you will call upon me." And he bowed, leaving nothing to Alec but departure.

The resentment which Alec felt made him walk miles before he returned home. When he did go to the big house on the North Side, he had made up his mind to go away if his father would let him break the contract which bound him to the office for two years. It was not a logical decision for him to make, perhaps, but it was

Digitized by Google

a natural consequence of the hurt pride which was crying just now more loudly than his love of Frederica.

Again the door opened and closed, but Harden thought it was the chambermaid on her evening duties, and he did not turn from his desk. He was writing now as though there had been no interruption. He had found that he would have to go to a committee meeting, and so would be delayed in making his appearance at Dr. Hartwell's chapel. If it were not for disappointing the doctor he would have broken the engagement altogether. He believed in the cold work of committees more than in the emotional response of an audience.

Frederica was standing with her back to the door, breathless and absolutely still, taking in half unconsciously the details of the room. There were shaded lights on the desk which shone on a few books and framed photographs. There were luxurious chairs and divans, a long cheval glass directly opposite where she stood, and great bowls of chrysanthemums on the table and on the mantel over a grate in which glowed a hard coal fire. The room had even to her breathless gaze a distinct personal air about it. She contrasted it on the instant with the study at home where they had spent so many hours together, and suddenly felt how poor they were; it made her feel unequal to the task ahead of her.

It was her long breath, almost a sob, that caught the ear of Eugene. He turned quickly, saw her with amazement, and rose to come to her.

"What is the matter—Miss Hartwell?"

She saw that he was in evening dress, something that he had never worn at their home, and he called her Miss Hartwell! Without moving she raised her eyes to his

Digitized by Google

and looked at him steadily. Harden did not ask her to sit down.

"Is some one ill—what has happened?"

"No," she said finally, "but I had to come! I'll tell you when I get—my—breath."

"You walked here?" he questioned.

"Yes—I—forgot my purse—I——"

He took hold of her hand and led her to a big cushioned chair, but she sat on its edge and shook her hair out of her eyes.

"I want you to send word to my father that you cannot speak to-night, please!"

Eugene looked down at her with growing surprise. "I don't understand."

"Unless you send word to him, he will have to ask you not to—and that will be so humiliating." She spoke directly and yet with that look of shrinking in her face.

"Tell me," said Eugene, drawing up another chair opposite her and seating himself.

"Mr. Sloane came and told my father this afternoon that he would not allow him to *lend* the chapel to other speakers—to you! It is just as you said, if a man employs you he owns you. My father is very—uncomfortable; I could not bear that he should have to break *his* promise to you, so I came to beg your pardon—and ask you to break yours to him."

Harden leaned toward her and said softly, "Why did *you* come?"

"I could not bear that he should ask you. It is so much worse for my father to be humiliated—than for me."

"But it is what I expected." He tried to speak in a matter-of-fact way in order to calm her.

Digitized by Google

"You expected we would not keep our word?" She spoke quickly.

"No! No! But that the owner of the chapel might not like my—philosophy. I have put your father in embarrassment and I am very sorry. I ought not to have accepted so readily his belief in his freedom."

Frederica quivered with this explanation.

He saw it and went on hastily. "It is really all my fault. Believe me. I will send a note to your father at once that I am ill—suddenly ill, and not able to speak to-night. Then he will not have to make any explanation to anyone."

She did not look relieved. "Mr. Harden, that would not be the truth. I would not want you to lie—for us."

"Child of truth!" He rose and went toward his writing table. "I will say, then, that I am leaving unexpectedly and immediately."

Frederica rose, too, but restrained her impulse to go toward him. "Is *that* true?" she asked.

"Yes." He turned and looked at her.

Then she came toward him. "I wish you would take me with you!"

Eugene grasped the back of a chair until the knuckles of his hands shone white. "I do not think you mean that!"

"Yes, I do." She took a deep breath. "Take me as your secretary. I can do that kind of work, and I must earn my living."

The color came back into his face. She had not meant what she had said, after all.

"Why must you work?" he asked.

"Because I cannot be supported any longer by Mr.

Digitized by Google

Sloane's money. I have been very useful to my father in his work, and I could be useful to you."

"That is not possible. You know—" he paused before the necessity of explaining conventions to her.

"I have helped you some—haven't I?" she asked, completely engrossed with this solution of her new and dreadful problem of dependence upon Mr. Sloane, upon Alec's father, who was her own father's employer.

Harden turned again to his table. "Do not make it harder for me—Frederica. I will write at once."

He seated himself and she stood a few feet from the table watching him. Her mind was active with what she could do to free herself from dependence, but her heart was stirred by the idea of his going away. She was bending toward him slightly, her eyes wide open and bright, full of the feeling which he was stirring. When he had signed his name he dropped the pen and looked up and saw her intentness. She was the first to break the silence.

"Can't you tell me what I ought to do?"

"I think I must tell you." He came and stood directly in front of her. "I think I must tell you!" He spoke with decision and with a hard note again in his voice.

"What?" she asked, for from the way he spoke she could tell that he was not thinking of what she ought to do, but of something he had kept back from her.

"I must tell you to put the barrier of your knowledge of the truth between us. If I do *not*!"—he walked to the far end of the room—"But I do not want to tell you. Do you trust me?" He came back and stood close to the chair in which she had again seated herself, reaching out his hand to seize hers and then drawing it back. "Do you trust me?" He kneeled to bring his eyes on

Digitized by Google

a level with hers as she sat there, and put his hands on the arms of her chair. She made no answer, and after a moment's waiting for it he bent his head and kissed her hands, tightly clasped in her lap. "Elsa?" he questioned, and mockery either of her or of himself flickered in his eyes as he raised his head again and rose to his feet.

"If I did not ask you to trust me, you would. Now that I ask, you cannot." He was boastful as he spoke to her, trying to understand. "I could have won you and married you. I have been fighting a great temptation to deceive you—and you have not even guessed it."

"No," said Frederica almost to herself. "And *I* love you." She said it simply and quietly.

"I know." He breathed deep for the courage which was slipping from him. "And I am not free. I did not know you were here when I came here to forget myself. I—did not—know—*you*—were here!"

He seated himself in the chair nearest him and looked fixedly at the floor.

"I am so sorry!" she said, as though speaking to him about something which had nothing to do with herself. "You ought not to suffer, for you are so—wonderful!"

But he did not look up. "I should not have come," he said. "I should have stayed over there and faced it!"

"Are you—married?" asked Frederica. "Is that it?"

He nodded. "Under the law, yes."

"It is the law there which is making you unhappy—not—not anything you have done?"

"Nothing but the law."

"And my father has always said that we should live according to the higher law—according to 'the righteousness of God without the law.'"

Digitized by Google

"Without the law." Eugene spoke abruptly. "If you were older, had courage, if you knew something of the world, I should say to you that we could go through the form of law over here, for no one, no one in America knows that I am bound. That has been my temptation!" He threw off the burden of it as he spoke. "And now I cannot be tempted—because I have told you. But you must go—but you must go." He tried to speak as usual. "Your father may be worried and I must send this note."

Frederica shivered. "I am so afraid."

"Afraid—of what?" he asked.

"Of to-morrow—alone! Last night I was afraid of to-day. And now I know why." She got up from her chair.

"I shall go away at once," he said.

She clasped and unclasped her hands in front of her, holding her arms rigid. "It's going to kill me." The great rush of emotions within her was terrifying.

"Oh, no! Some day you will be glad." Harden dragged his words.

"But I am so tired here already." She put her hand over her heart. "I should only have to work hard a little while and walk miles—and never rest—and it would stop." She closed her eyes and caught her breath sharply, with the swinging sensation in her heart.

"Frederica!" Eugene put his arm about her and drew her to him. But the moment she opened her eyes he released her and stepped back from her. "You must go now," he said again, his lips white.

"It is as though I could not," she said. "I don't have to obey you, do I? I am not a child. I can choose to go with you—if I am not afraid to go without the law. I can choose, if I have courage, can't I?"

Digitized by Google

"No, for it is only the courage of innocence."

Frederica was absolutely motionless, and he did not make a sign of his presence to disturb her. It was well that she was looking across the room at the glowing coals and not into his face, for had she seen the desire in his eyes she would have been swayed to another decision than the one to which she was coming. When she spoke she was trying to smile.

"It is very strange, isn't it, if we love each other and believe in each other that words—the words of the law should come between us? It doesn't seem real to me."

"It is real to me!"

She lifted her head with a memory. "You spoke of it as a cage. We ought to destroy it. You have great strength!" In the emotion of her inexperience she was forcing him to bring her down from the vague and veiled heights where she dwelt to the realities of society.

He went back to what she had said. "Even if you had the courage and I was willing that the world should look at you and misjudge you—we should not be free—to work together. My enemies——"

"Enemies?" said Frederica quickly.

"Those who think I want to destroy society, who think I want to destroy all law—they would use our life—no matter how beautiful it was—against us. They would have the right, as the world is now, Frederica."

"I had not thought of that." She spoke as though she were seeing dimly what he meant. "I was thinking just of—myself."

Harden went to her and took her two hands in his and spoke as he was used to speaking with her, in self-control —"My work means more to me, Freda, than my happi-

Digitized by Google

ness or your happiness. Even if you think I am hard I must say that."

"That is one reason I love you, I think." She spoke softly, and it shook his calm, but he did not release her hands.

"You have no idea of what lies outside your own heart, Frederica. I do not want to be the one to open your eyes. My child, if anyone knew you were here—in my rooms—they could say that I was a dangerous person." There was a note of sarcasm in his voice which escaped her, but she was listening intently now. "They would not suspect anything of you—for you are an American girl, but they might think that I——"

Frederica caught his meaning more quickly than he could have supposed. She withdrew her hands from his suddenly and said in a strained voice: "I must go!" Then her thought went back to the words she had spoken while she had been trying to free herself from dependence upon Mr. Sloane. "When I asked you to take me with you, I did not know that you loved me; I was—I——"

"You were speaking—of business." He gave her the words although they sounded absurd to him. They relieved her, however.

"Yes," she said, "for I am going to earn my own living now, and it was natural to come to you first, wasn't it?" She looked up at him with trembling lips. "And no one knows I am here," she said, "so they cannot make any trouble for you." She paused. "No one—that is—except the man downstairs."

Already she was beginning to suffer for coming. It was a terrible thing to have wakened her to self-consciousness. But what else could he have done?

Digitized by Google

"If you will give me the note, I will take it to my father," she said, turning toward the door.

"I will send that by a boy. You would not want him to know that it did not come voluntarily from me."

Frederica had her hand on the door knob when some one knocked. She was startled, and opened the door herself. There stood her father and Mr. Sloane. She shrank to one side, for there was the "world" entering upon them.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV

THE WORLD ENTERS

ALEXANDER SLOANE was a man of sixty-five, to whom opportunity had come when Chicago was burned. He had seized it eagerly and had thereby trebled his wealth. He was in all respects the typical American business man, whose one aim was increase of fortune. He was not hard, as employers go, but set in his way. Courteous and open to suggestion from his equals, he was a man to listen to Dr. Hartwell because Hartwell had stood high in their college class. When he handed over the money for the religious work he had nothing more to say. Recently he had, however, come to look to the doctor for help in suppressing discontent among his employees.

The truth of the situation was that the men as employees of Sloane were discontented, and refused to accept spiritual benefits from him *via* a kind, idealistic, impractical clergyman. Personally they liked the doctor well enough, but the antagonism to his position was instinctive and kept them apart from him. He did not know their real feeling and had begun to consider himself a failure, when Eugene Harden came to him and asked his coöperation and the use of his chapel for men's meetings.

Naturally Sloane disliked the idea of trades unions

Digitized by Google

holding meetings in his church, and when he heard that Dr. Hartwell was making much of a foreign socialist, whose work was to destroy the industrial system whereby he was enabled to make immense profits without much personal effort, he became conscious of his power as master of the situation, and expressed himself without hesitation to his highest employee, Dr. Hartwell.

"No more anarchists or socialists," he said, "in *my* church. If there is anything to be said there, you say it! You never were a judge of human nature. If you must associate with firebrands, keep them at home."

And Dr. Hartwell had shown no resentment, but an hour afterwards, shortly after Frederica had gone out the back door, he had gone out the front, and taking a car, had caught Sloane waiting for his dinner, and had persuaded him to come over to meet Eugene Harden. For some reason, perhaps because the request came unexpectedly, Alexander Sloane had come back into the city, and was now standing just within Harden's door, but he was not at once introduced, for Dr. Hartwell's surprise at seeing Frederica robbed him of speech.

"Why are you here?" asked Dr. Hartwell, ignoring Harden.

"I came to ask him to send word to you that he could not speak to-night."

Dr. Hartwell made a hurried introduction between the two men. Freda saw Sloane look long at the Austrian from under heavy eyebrows, and she thought that she knew what he was thinking. She saw her father's purpose at once: he must be made Harden's friend. She looked at Mr. Sloane and a shade of confusion passed over her face. When he said "Good evening, Freda," she made no answer, and met his eye falteringly. He watched her in

Digitized by Google

a half-sinister way. Harden pushed forward a chair and tried to distract Sloane's attention from her.

"I have been unfortunate," he said, "in not meeting you before."

Sloane answered curtly, "My friend Hartwell seems to think that I'm doing you an injustice by not letting you speak to-night."

Dr. Hartwell turned in surprise at Sloane's manner.

Harden flushed. "I did not know, Mr. Sloane," he said, "that it was necessary to get your permission to speak in Dr. Hartwell's chapel. Since you feel it so, I wish to say that I was on the point of breaking my engagement. But I am very sorry that I should have put Dr. Hartwell in so embarrassing a position."

Sloane did not take any seat, and turned as if to go. Dr. Hartwell stood there, transfixed with amazement at the position he found himself in. He was very much annoyed with Frederica, and he was unable to explain the instant dislike which Sloane had already expressed by his manner for Harden.

Alexander Sloane was a man to whom dignity was not native. Yet he kept up the appearance of it even when his words were insolent. He glanced around the room, his eyes resting particularly upon the flowers. "I had not expected," he said, "to find a labor agitator in such comfortable quarters."

Harden made no reply and Sloane followed his own remark.

"I question," he said, "the right that any foreigner has to come over here and stir up trouble. We can look after our own affairs. I do not trust them."

Frederica spoke from where she stood close to the door. "You can trust Mr. Harden, Mr. Sloane. Your men do."

Digitized by Google

"Freda, Freda," said her father.

Alexander Sloane looked at her from under heavy brows with that expression of suspicion which is the greatest insult to man or woman. "I would like to know, Freda, why your father lets you meddle in these things—lets you come over here to a man's rooms." He turned to Dr. Hartwell. "You are too much in the clouds, Hartwell, to have a daughter to look after."

He had said the words which capped Frederica's confusion. There was no longer any doubt in her mind that he was that "world" which Eugene had said would destroy his work should it suspect him. She was meeting convention for the first time, and it had come upon her in the guise of destroyer. To her mind there seemed but one thing to do—to make these two men friends—to make Alexander Sloane trust the Austrian. She could see no other way that would help. She turned to Eugene Harden. "Won't you explain your work to Mr. Sloane? I think he doesn't understand what you're trying to do"

Sloane waved a deprecatory hand and signified to Dr. Hartwell that he wished to go. "I haven't the time to hear theories to-night. I have missed my dinner as it is."

"But you must," said Frederica, coming toward him.

Again her father spoke her name, for he could see that it was her presence here that had done the mischief, and she was making bad matters worse by playing the champion for the man who should have been allowed to win Sloane by himself. "This is no place for you, Freda."

He had put the thing into definite expression, and in a moment of excitement, which came upon her as the words fell on her ears, she obeyed a tremendous impulse, which would have been impossible had she been older or more experienced. With an amazing simplicity she

Digitized by Google

smiled up at Mr. Sloane and said: "But it is all right, my being here, because I am engaged to be married to Mr. Harden."

Both Sloane and her father were looking at her or they would have seen Eugene Harden's start of surprise. Dr. Hartwell was utterly lost for a moment, powerless to say anything.

"This—this is unexpected, Frederica."

"Yes," she said, stifled by a sense of her responsibility in playing the rôle she had set.

"Why didn't you tell me?"

She looked at him helplessly. "Because," she said, "because——"

Eugene came forward. Frederica could not follow up her first lie by the ones which were made absolutely necessary by it, and it was for him to take from her the burden.

"She has not told you, Dr. Hartwell," he said, "because it did not seem wise that this should be discussed with anyone until she was quite certain that she knew her own mind."

Hochberg, who had tired of eating his dinner alone, had come up into the room in time to hear these words. He pursed his lips and looked in astonishment at his friend. Then, with a slight bow, crossed to the far side of the room and stood by the fireplace. Not again did he look toward the group, but he was listening intently.

Alexander Sloane then spoke directly to Harden. Anger shook his voice. He had not been very much shocked to find Frederica there, for it was like her and her father to be in unaccountable places at unexpected hours. But this announcement of hers hurt his parental pride, and the resentment which before had been that of a man who feels he has just cause for indignation, was in-

Digitized by Google

creased by the personal feeling that his son had been deceived. "In this country," he said, "the family likes to know about these things, even if they do give American girls the right to make their own choice."

Eugene's courtesy was the more marked because of the other man's manner.

"Yes," he said very quietly, "it was I who had persuaded her not to confide it to anyone until she was quite, quite certain. If Dr. Hartwell disapproves, why then"—he paused—"it is not an engagement which shall bind her."

Sloane turned to Frederica with a forced smile. "It is just enough of an engagement," he said, "to be afraid of."

Frederica was overwhelmed. She saw now how terribly she had complicated matters and had made them worse instead of better. Of course she did not guess that it was hurt pride that was finding utterance; that Mr. Sloane was cut to the quick to find that his son had been supplanted.

She turned to her father. "I am afraid Anne is keeping supper for us," she said.

Dr. Hartwell turned to Harden with constraint in his face and voice. "What you have told me——"

Frederica interrupted. "What *I* told you, father."

"Well, well," he said, "it concerns you both. I shall have to consider many sides of this before I can speak of your attachment to each other."

Frederica did not glance once at Harden, but went straight to the door, her lips pressed tight, but her head held high in the final effort to keep her rôle. She knew without looking that Sloane was leaving without shaking hands or signifying any interest in Eugene. She knew

Digitized by Google

that her father was ill at ease in his own leave-taking. It was a miserable departure. Before she had left the room Frederica knew that she had made a bad situation worse. And there had been a stranger, some friend of Eugene Harden's, who had heard all that had been said. That was what hurt her most of all, for her intuition told her that some explanation would have to be made to this man standing by the fire looking at his own shining boot as it rested on the fender.

On the way home Dr. Hartwell had no desire to talk. He was one of the men who faces a daughter's decision to marry with something of embarrassment. The abstract principle of a woman's right to choose her husband means the instinctive dread of having the child pass into the mysteries of life away from home. Then, too, he was preoccupied with the immediate problem ahead of him—that of facing a crowd of men who would come in enthusiasm to hear the Austrian speak, come for the first time to his chapel, after ten years of waiting—and how was he going to be able to hold them without the help of Harden? Down in his heart the doctor dreaded the task before him, and forgot for the moment what had just passed.

Frederica interrupted his thoughts once by saying: "I hope you will not find it necessary to—tell Anne. I'd rather you didn't."

"No, no, certainly not," said her father abstractedly.

Sloane had left them at the door of the hotel and gone home in a mood which was far removed from the one in which he had originally played the philanthropist with Hartwell. His *amour propre* had been severely wounded, and some one would have to pay. He was one of those tenacious egotists who give up illusions about themselves

Digitized by Google

and their possessions only at the highest price—the price to be paid always by some one else.

Alec was waiting in the library for him, and, taking no account of his father's mood, not knowing that his father was still without dinner, and hence unapproachable, he asked him to let him off the contract which bound him to the office.

Sloane turned upon him. "Why?" he asked.

"I want to go away," said Alec. "I want to go to New York. I always thought I ought to have a year there before I settled down to work—and I find I am missing it."

The opportunity was ready for Alexander Sloane to use. He knew perfectly well what was in Alec's mind, but he would not take advantage of the boy's emotion at this moment to ask for explanation or to give explanation. He took it for granted that Alec in some way had found out about the engagement. "You stay here," he said. "You stay right here in this town and prove to that girl that she has made an awful blunder. We'll show her yet that an American is the only fit person for a girl to marry."

Alec straightened a little. He did not want the subject of Frederica brought home to him. He recognized in himself the same desire for the privileges of silence which had just been claimed by the Austrian. He said nothing, and his father made one more remark before going in to his dinner. "I should not be surprised if the engagement were broken to-morrow. I do not think she really cares for him, and I think he——"

Mrs. Sloane came into the room at that moment, and by common consent not another word was said. These two men were likely to protect her from anything dis-

Digitized by Google

agreeable. But Alec realized when he was left alone there in the library that his father knew more than he did, and that Frederica was really engaged to be married to another man.

In the room at the hotel which Alexander Sloane had just left, Hochberg was laughing at his friend. "It was a *contretemps* which must have been disagreeable to you—the American father facing you. But"—Hochberg paused, looked at the ceiling—"but he asked you no questions. It was the other man, the portly, the successful man, who was displeased. Who was he?"

Harden was looking at the floor. It seemed as though he had not heard these flippant questions. When he raised his eyes and looked at Hochberg, there was something in them which rebuked all flippancy.

The smile died out of the little blond Austrian's face, and he came forward with his two hands outstretched and seized Eugene's. "You do care," he said. "I beg your pardon. What are you going to do?"

"I am going away," said Eugene.

"No," said Hochberg, "stay here. Put it off—put off the consummation—the American wedding—and you shall be free. I shall be in Vienna within two weeks. If I have to go to the Pope himself—to the Emperor—you shall be free!"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV

THE DAY OF INDEPENDENCE

ANOTHER gray morning spread its thoughts before Frederica's eyes. She recalled the hour in Eugene's room as though she had been an onlooker. Nothing that she had said or that she had done up to that moment when she had spoken to her father was in the least clear to her. She got up in the cold and went to her little desk. There in the gray light, without putting anything over her thin nightdress, she wrote a note to him with trembling hands. Her hair fell on her shoulders in straight locks and got into her eyes; but not once did she pause until she had finished.

"My dear Mr. Harden," she wrote, "I lied last night because I was afraid that by being there I was going to hurt your work. But I did not help you any. I was not thinking when I said I was engaged to you what I should do to-day, but it will be very easy. I shall tell my father that I have decided I do not love you enough to marry you. And he will tell Mr. Sloane. I am very sorry. Sincerely,

"FREDERICA HARTWELL."

She did not read it over, but put it in an envelope, addressed, sealed, and stamped it; and then she began to dress with the same haste she had written. Not once did she look in the mirror, not even while she was fixing

Digitized by Google

her hair. She put on her best hat and her cloak, then she sat down again and wrote a note to her father, saying that she would be gone all the morning, but hoped to be home in time to help get dinner. In a postscript she wrote:

"I do not love Mr. Harden as much as I thought I did, so I have written him that the engagement is broken. Please tell Mr. Sloane if you see him."

This note she put on the dining-room table at her father's place, then nodding to the Schneider boy, who was making the kitchen fire, she went out the back door with almost the same impulsiveness as on the evening before. She had but one thought, and that was to find some place where she could earn her living. Not another mouthful would she take unless she could pay for it herself. For that reason she had eaten no breakfast; it was breakfast bought by Mr. Sloane's money.

If Frederica's facts had not always presented themselves to her as so exceedingly simple, her life would not have become so complicated. But with her an idea always carried in it the impulse to action. The moment she felt she ought to do a thing she began trying to do it. This morning she went with the crowd of workers over the Twelfth Street Viaduct—day laborers chattering in many tongues, factory workers, and hundreds of clerks—the youth of a dozen lands pressing into American industry. Harden had often spoken to Frederica of the pathos in the fact that these children of the nations had high hopes and great trust in American principles and did not realize that they were entering the prison houses

Digitized by Google

of the age to be worn out and flung aside with greater disregard than in their native places.

The vagueness of what she intended to do when she got on the other side of the viaduct allowed her mind to wander to the destinies of the hurrying girls and boys. They knew where they were going and how much a week they were getting. Many of them knew each other, and in none of their faces did she see melancholy or fear. She felt suddenly that she was entering a new world, that until this particular day at half-past seven she had been an outsider. Now she was on the great highway of the age—the way to work.

There should have been a military band playing for these hundreds to march at the day's beginning. It was the army of industry out for its early morning review, going into the day's service without recognition from those who were to be served, those who still slept in warm beds far away from the camp of war. If there had been music and honor and a sense of justice in the air, the gray November day would have begun gloriously. Frederica's cheeks grew red with the new warmth within her.

At the other end of the viaduct the crowd began to scatter—some north, some south. Many got into the street cars and were carried a long distance to their places of work. It was the crossroads for Frederica. She turned north on State Street and walked ten minutes before she came to a store big enough to give her a sense of being inconspicuous. She went in and asked for the manager.

In her search for freedom from dependence, it would have seemed more natural and fitting if she had looked for a position of governess or secretary; but she knew that to get such a position she would have to tell who she

Digitized by Google

was and get references, and so bring on the storm of her father's disapproval and Anne's surprise. There was more democracy and personal freedom in a store or factory, she thought. Besides, to find work apparently better adapted to her would require at least several days for application and formality, and with her natural impetuosity she wanted to go home at noon with her position assured. In her uncompromising way she had left at home her purse with its few dollars, and had almost grudged the stamp she had put on Harden's letter. But as she entered this store she gave a sigh of relief; she expected success at once, and could see herself coming in that door morning after morning.

The manager had not come down, and the floorwalker told her she could wait if she wanted to, but that there was no chance of a job, if that was what she had come for. She said that she would not wait and walked between the counters, whose display was still covered with dingy calico. The girls were beginning to arrange things, talking and laughing without rebuke, for there were no customers at that hour. One of the girls at the ribbon counter, who was putting her remnant box in order, spoke to Frederica as she passed.

"Looking for work?" she asked.

"Yes," said Frederica, pausing.

"If you can sew hat braid, they're lookin' for girls at Reissner's—up the street two blocks. But they don't pay you enough to live on, unless you're living home and don't have no board."

"How much do you get?" asked Frederica.

"Three dollars, but I live home."

Frederica thanked her and went on out of the store and up the street. She was still so nerved to the en-

Digitized by Google

counter that courage ran high. The Reissner wholesale millinery sign did not tempt her, for although she was living home she must pay board. As she walked along she was figuring how much she must earn to pay her board and buy her clothes; six or seven dollars she put at the minimum, because she was planning to pay one-third of their household expenses, just as Anne did. There was rent, fire, light, food, and the service of the washerwoman one day in the week.

The next big store that Frederica entered was all ready for the day's custom, but as the custom had not yet come in the girls were talking together, exchanging gossip and gayety. The manager was in a small office near the credit department, and outside his door waited a half dozen other girls, who would all take precedence of her in applying for work. She stood in line, and it was nearly half an hour before she went in and the door swung to behind her. She felt the manager taking her measure.

"What do you want?" he asked, with a touch of the facetious in his manner.

"Have you any vacancies?" she asked.

"Perhaps we have, if you've had experience."

"No," said Frederica, turning at once to go.

"Well, wait—wait," he said, laughing. "You'll never get a job if you're so easily discouraged. What do you want?"

"Anything," said Frederica.

"We like to have pretty girls in this store, and you're the first one I've seen this morning. I'll find a place for you." He rose to call an assistant, and as he passed Frederica he put his hand familiarly on her shoulder. "You don't look very strong," he said. "And we don't want you here if you are the fainting, hysterical kind."

Digitized by Google

"I have never fainted," replied Frederica.

"Used to being on your feet?" he asked.

"Why—I think so," she said.

"Meyer," he said to the young Jew who came in, "put this young lady in the men's hose department. Kitty's gone, you know. Tell Gregg to make it easy for her at first." He waved Frederica out, but she did not start to go.

"How much do you pay?" she asked, flushing with this first experience of bargaining for her labor.

"Two-fifty at first," said the manager, sitting down at his desk and pushing the bell for the next applicant to come in.

"I can't stay here, then," she said.

Meyer, on the threshold of the other door, showed impatience. The manager spoke sharply. "Haven't you a family?" he asked.

"Yes, but I want to be independent," she answered.

He threw back his head with a laugh. "Well, my pretty Miss Nancy, try it on two-fifty; and if you don't want your family to help you, get some friend."

Frederica looked at him rather blankly. He saw that she did not catch the meaning of the word "friend" as he used it; he became explicit.

"I am being unusually kind to you, putting you at the men's hose counter. You can make friends there; try and make a silk-stocking one. Judge them by what they buy. You needn't do the bargain-counter work, because only their wives come there."

Frederica, for all her inexperience, understood now; she turned and went out of the office by the same door she had come in, which was not the usual procedure. Outside the file of girls was a long one, and as she passed

Digitized by Google

them she looked in terror at them, thinking of the choice they might make inside that office. Perhaps many of them knew what he would say and would not be shocked. And it may have been that Maggie had invited her sad experience in this way.

It was not yet nine o'clock, but Frederica's courage had passed its noon and was declining. In all her shopping visits to these big stores she had never even suspected that any girl's way to work was through such an office. And she could not bring herself to go into another store. When she came to Reissner's, the sobriety of a wholesale place seemed respectable and safe, and she went in. To her relief she was sent to the forewoman in the hat-braiding department.

"You can make five dollars a week, if you're smart," said the woman, and put Frederica between two girls who were sewing rough braids with great rapidity. The forewoman told her how to go to work, gave her a great quantity of braid, and then left her to try alone. Frederica was naturally deft and she soon found the sewing easy, but her fingers were not used to the braid, and after an hour they began to feel sore. The room itself was large and light, and the half hundred girls who were at work in it were almost noiseless. They were doing piecework and were so intent upon the amount they were accomplishing they had no time to talk. Many of them looked nervous and strained.

For three hours Frederica worked. She was not thinking of anything except her task and her surroundings; the long uncurtained windows indicated that there was an outside world, but it was as though she knew nothing but what she was seeing. Every once in a while she felt almost overwhelmed with faintness, and when the noon

Digitized by Google

whistle blew she suddenly bethought herself of the long walk home to dinner. When she rose from the stooped position in which she had been working, everything grew black before her, and she had to lean against the table.

One of the two girls next to whom she had been seated came up to her, putting on hat and cloak. "Where are you going to eat?" she asked.

"I was going home," said Frederica rather weakly.

"How far d'you live?" asked the girl.

"On Desplaines near Twelfth Street."

"Gee!" said the girl, "you won't have time, and if you're more'n half an hour away you may get fired. I'll show you a place next door, around the corner."

Frederica put on her hat and cloak, but at the door she stopped and put her hand on the girl's arm. "I think I will not eat any lunch," she said.

The girl put her arm around Frederica's waist and jerked her along gayly. "It's my treat to-day," she said. "You're a new girl, and that's what I always do for the new girls."

That was the way the girl tactfully covered her belief that Frederica was half-starved and without money.

Frederica accepted the invitation, and as they ate together in the cheap, dirty restaurant, she felt again the surging warmth within her. She was one of the wage-earners, and she had found the human heart of the age beating in a girl who sewed hat braid and made at the most seventy-five cents a day.

During the afternoon the work and the surroundings fell back a little in Frederica's mind, and she began to think of herself with regard to Eugene Harden. She wondered if he had left town as he had said he was going to, or if he had felt bound to stay after her wild state-

Digitized by Google

ment. As she sat there sewing gray braid for women's hats, Frederica began to feel a return of the mortification that had swept over her that morning when she remembered that she had said she was engaged to a man who had but a few moments before told her that he was married.

"You look like you had a headache," said Frederica's girl friend; "I wouldn't try to sew too much to-day. I'll bet you can make a dollar a day when you get on to it."

Frederica was glad of the interruption, although her body still tingled with the rush of blood from her heart at the full acknowledgment to herself of what she had done. She wondered how the meeting at the chapel had gone off. The thought of her father's bowing to Sloane's tyranny made her ashamed. She made up her mind to tell her father that she was ashamed of him. In young idealism she had no mercy, and did not realize that her father could not be expected to give up all that he had in the world in order that one man, a comparative stranger, should have an hour's talk in the chapel. Like a squirrel, she followed the circle of thoughts—Harden, Mr. Sloane, and her father—until there seemed nothing more to be thought, and yet she had not reached any place. Was Eugene in Chicago, and would she ever have to see him again? She wanted to explain it all to him, and at the same time she was afraid to see him—for how could she ever trust herself to speak again to him? What might she not say? She was face to face with her own strong impulse to go to him and beg him to forgive her—and way down in her heart she knew that probably she would blunder again if she saw him. As the day grew to a close she began for the first time in her life to see

Digitized by Google

that life had mystery in it, that it was not a wide open place of decided facts and absolute truths, but was a winding road toward the unexpected and unknown.

It was dark when the girls stopped work. Frederica's fingers were so cramped with their unusual activity that she could hardly button her cloak or pin on her hat.

"If you're going my way," said the girl next her, "come along now. You won't get paid until to-morrow night, but I've got the car fare."

Frederica put her two small hands on the girl's shoulders. "You are so good to me," she said. "It has made me almost happy to-day just to know you."

The girl was embarrassed. Their ways were opposite, and Frederica was glad of the long walk ahead of her.

She walked rather slowly because she was tired and was planning what to say at home. The first impulse of making a storm, of setting herself up as an example of independence, was quieted. It would be better to take her actions as a matter of course and consider that the remarkable thing had been that she had not worked before, when there was every reason why she should. It was after seven when she finally paused on the front steps before going into the house. Her father and Anne would be at supper, she thought, and she must be very matter of fact with them, must not let them see any traces in her account of the day's doings which would lead them to suspect her of emotion. Never before had Frederica been conscious of her behavior before these two people, but never before had she the least thought of any feeling to conceal from them.

She went softly into the dark hallway and then into the study. Eugene Harden was sitting on the couch, his face hidden by his hands, and he did not hear her enter. Some-

Digitized by Google

thing had happened! Neither Anne nor her father was there, nor were they in the dining room, whose door was open.

"What has happened?" she asked.

Harden lifted his head and rose quickly. "Frederica!" he cried, and took her, startled and unresisting, into his arms.

"What's happened?" she repeated.

"We were frightened about you!" he answered, unpinning her hat and throwing it on the floor.

She was still too startled to think what he was doing; she hardly felt his lips on her rumpled hair and cold cheeks.

"Where have you been?" he asked, as he helped her out of her old cloak. "Your father has gone out to telephone Mrs. Parrish, Miss Forester has gone over to the Scanlans', and I just telephoned to Mr. Sloane."

Frederica seated herself in front of the fire. "What a fuss! Why, it's only a little after seven o'clock."

"Yes," said Eugene, "but you have been gone all day, no one knew where, and your note to me—and the one to your father." He leaned over the chair as though he could not trust her not to slip into invisibility again.

Frederica, looking at the glowing coals, contracted at the mention of the notes; she stiffened a little and began to resent the past two or three moments when he had caressed her.

"I don't know why they should be. I went out to find work."

Harden came between her and the fire. "Frederica," he said, "don't you love me enough to marry me?"

She looked up at him in a dazed sort of way, yet she saw him distinctly as he stood there, tense with his ques-

Digitized by Google

tion; every little detail of his dress was plain to her, and his eyes under their black brows.

"I can't," she said in a whisper.

"Can't what?" he said, leaning toward her.

"I can't marry you." She leaned back in her chair so as not to be so near to him, but he took hold of her two hands and pulled her slowly to her feet, his eyes fixed on hers.

"Freda, to-day I have learned that I am free. Do you love me to-day?"

She was pulling back from his hold upon her; there flashed through her mind that perhaps he was not telling the truth, that he was lying to-night as she had lied the night before. But the thought which followed the flash of suspicion was that she would rather be deceived, would rather let him take the responsibility of a lie than to let him go. The strain of the day was telling on her. He stood there offering rest and comfort if she would say yes to his question, if she would surrender in apparent trust of him. Before he could have guessed that she had any thought except of surprise at his news she said, "Yes."

And when, this second time, his arms were about her and his lips on hers, she knew it by the joy she felt in every nerve. The surrender was intoxication; her eyes closed, and her head, with its thoughts and suspicions quieted, was on his shoulder.

There was absolute quiet in the room. Eugene was stilled by the sight of her great emotion. He had not thought her capable of anything but a girlish sentiment. He had expected to waken the woman in her, and he was finding it already awake. The discovery brought him a sense of responsibility, and he looked over her head at

Digitized by Google

the opposite wall as though reading many questions there. Frederica looked up and caught the look. It stirred again her suspicion, but again she stifled the distrust; she would not let him go now! In sudden impulse she threw her arms about his neck and kissed his face again and again. He grew white under it, and spoke her name softly, almost at the same moment that her father, standing in the doorway, spoke it loudly.

Frederica turned, went swiftly to her father—"I am so sorry I frightened you all," she said without one tremor of embarrassment that he had seen her kissing Eugene. "But if I had come at noon I should have lost the place."

"What place?" asked Dr. Hartwell, sinking weakly into his big chair, for he had been very much frightened these last two hours.

"At Reissner's—I got work there this morning."

"Why?" asked her father.

Frederica went to him and stroked his forehead soothingly. "I must be independent," she said, "and earn my own living. I ought to have done that a long time ago."

There was some annoyance in Dr. Hartwell's sigh. "And do you intend to remain independent?" he asked, glancing at Harden.

"Why—why—" She looked from one to the other.

Harden emphasized the question by asking: "Are you independent if you take money from Reissner's?"

"But it's better than taking it from Mr. Sloane," she replied, and at the instant was sorry when she saw the look on her father's face.

"You need not take it from either, Freda," said Eugene, coming over to the two of them. "You shall have money in your own right. It is yours now." Then

Digitized by Google

he turned directly to her father. "I ought hardly to speak of such a thing so soon perhaps—but one half of my income is for—my wife."

Frederica colored and stooped over to kiss her father. It covered her confusion and his, for Dr. Hartwell had not yet thought of her marriage with Harden as anything except a vague supposition based on vague possibility.

"This morning you told me—you wrote me—that—that——"

"I know," interrupted Frederica, "but I was mistaken. I do love him," she whispered.

Dr. Hartwell rose with a great deal of dignity and took Harden's hand. "This is very serious for me. I shall have to ask you to forgive me if I show little joy. I must get used to her being grown-up—and in love."

Harden pressed his hand without a word. Frederica felt a new sense of the mystery. It had never occurred to her that her father would be so stirred. She wondered if he would have felt so "serious" if it had been Alec Sloane.

Just then Anne came in, breathless and anxious. She had run almost all the way home from the Scanlans', hoping to find Frederica. Now that she saw her she cried a little on the girl's shoulder and scolded her gently for worrying them.

Dr. Hartwell patted Anne's hand as it lay on Frederica's arm. "Freda has come back, but I am afraid it is not to stay long. She is going to marry Mr. Harden."

Harden saw Anne's start of surprise and the look of fear that swept her face. And she knew that he saw it; it made a distinct barrier between them, even when, after

Digitized by Google

a moment, she went to where he was standing by the fire and held out her hand.

"I saw that you were as worried as we were—and I had almost guessed why. But I cannot quite imagine Freda—in love, or married."

Mrs. Schneider came in through the dining room; her German rotundity almost filled the double door.

"So late and no Abendessen," she said. "I haf baked coffee Kuchen for your supper. It goes gut mit coffee."

Anne went back into the kitchen to see it, and Frederica, with tremulous lips, began setting the table, while Eugene stayed in the study to talk with Dr. Hartwell just as he had done so many times.

Digitized by Google

BOOK TWO

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER I

THE RETURN TO SUSPICION

THE train flying fast through the twilight began to slacken its speed just outside of Chicago. Frederica looked out upon the shrouded mass ahead with its fringe of outreaching lighted avenues. As the train went on by the suburbs it passed through stretches of uncultivated land lying there quiet, like rural parentheses in the tale of a crowded city. Little by little the dim mass began to grow ragged on its upper edge; chimneys and roofs jutted into the smoky sunset sky. The thousands of chimneys were scratching the creed of industrialism upon a murky sky, a gloomy creed on a dingy page, but Frederica was glad to see it —it was Chicago!

The lights in the Pullman had not been lit and she could see the gray-purple pictures through the window. Eugene came in from the smoker and sat down beside her.

"Isn't it wonderful?" she said, without turning her head.

For answer he put his hand over her gloved one and looked with her for a moment; then he let his eyes rest on her. She looked very young as she sat there. He had chosen her hat and traveling coat, and she had never looked so well. Another might have suggested bright colors to 'light up her pallor and her hair, but it had

Digitized by Google

pleased his fancy to put her in gray, and so enhance her characteristics—which were those of twilight or dawn, half tones, promises of color through mist, indefinite, impalpable, and subtle.

Frederica turned suddenly, and he saw that her eyes glistened with tears.

"Eugene," she said softly, "something will happen. I am too happy—I am afraid!" Her hand turned palm upward under his and clung to it.

They had been married three months and had been all that time in the South, where they had found the spring, and were now bringing it with them to their old home. There had been two months between the day of Frederica's search for independence and the marriage. During all that time she had lived as in a dream. Not once again did that first flash of suspicion come into her memory, for Eugene was too happy, too wholly revealed, to make it seem possible that he had a secret of any sort. And Frederica was born to trust. Never in her life had she distrusted.

During the time of the preparation Dr. Hartwell and Eugene had both been so busy with the organization of the lumbermen, that after all they had seen little of Frederica and Anne. Dr. Hartwell had shown his resentment of Sloane's order by working much more definitely and energetically for the things for which Eugene Harden stood. He used the chapel only for religious meetings, and the women and children came as usual; and as usual the men did not come. But he had spoken in a great many of the hall meetings, and had gone several times with Eugene to the committees.

Little by little Harden had inspired these two thousand men with the necessary self-confidence. They had

Digitized by Google

won their strike largely through his assistance, although he held an unofficial position. He had gained the public sympathy in certain circles uptown for the eight-hour day, and he had won by his magnetism, his vitality, in personal intercourse with the members of the Union League Club, and with the friends of the Gilfeathers; and he had kept withal a certain reserve, a certain impersonal attitude toward the object for which he was striving, which gave him a position such as no other man in Chicago occupied. Once he had spoken at Central Music Hall, and the big auditorium was filled largely with the young business men of the town, and, although he spoke of class antagonisms, and emphasized the conflicts in industry between capital and labor, he seemed rather to be destroying the antagonism between the two.

Even into Frederica's dream, while she and Anne sewed and were for the time being conventional women, planning for the bridal, she felt the great stirring in the city. She felt that it was due to this man who had come as a stranger among them. She talked about him with pride to the Scanlans, to Mr. Schneider, even to Mr. Flanagan, who was apparently on the best of terms with the workmen.

Daily, Frederica grew in stature toward that of a woman who was capable of interest in subjects outside the home. It did not seem that Eugene Harden was trying in any way to influence her toward his beliefs. He had the foreign feeling in his blood about women, although his belief in them was very great. But he told Frederica one time that when he first saw her he saw her as a young girl, sitting in the sunshine with her lap full of jeweled beads that sparkled, and that he had known in that glimpse that if she was startled she would spring

Digitized by Google

to her feet and scatter them in her terror; and he had told her rather laughingly that he wanted to give her the silken thread of his philosophy, that she might string these bright beads of her life and keep them. Of course he did not know that his shadow, fallen before her, had startled her. He did not guess the very day he appeared was for her the beginning of a conflict between the natural unthinking girl and the woman growing self-conscious. Her father's influence had kept her sympathies astir, and she was naturally impulsive in behalf of others. But this man had come with a determined hand, and his own poise and self-control, his intensity of purpose, made him the strongest influence without any effort. So many afternoons she had listened, and only now and then she spoke up in her odd way. Her manner of speech was always a fascination. It was shadowed by intensity, and for emphasis she let her silence slip in before the word she felt was the climax. The pause was not hesitation, but the flight of the thought from heart to word; for Frederica's thoughts were from her heart.

Harden treated her somewhat as a child, but little by little he grew proud of her interest and of the grasp she had; and she knew that and planned how they should work together. The book he had been writing on the industrial conditions of America was for her a text-book —not only facts, but of his ways of thinking—and unconsciously she had given him many suggestions, and had shown him where the highest fruit of the land was: unconscious self-confidence, and a belief, not ashamed of itself, in ideals. Of the things which disillusioned him he seldom spoke, and neither she nor her father guessed his discouragement.

Digitized by Google

They were married in the chapel, and there were very few present. The Sloanes had sent a handsome wedding gift, but without a word of congratulation. Anne had been somewhat depressed, though she tried her best to conceal it. It was not so much that Frederica was leaving her as it was her own unhappiness, for she began to think of the future. She would not be able to stay on there at the house after Frederica's departure. Anne's suspicion of Harden showed only occasionally, and it was, after all, only the national conventional feeling against any foreigner. Sometimes she tried to get him to talk about Austria, about the conditions over there, and the laws, but he was always loath to talk about them. He said quite frankly that he wanted to forget that part of his life.

Frederica began to realize that his reserve was impenetrable, not that she was really curious or desirous of going back of the present which was for her so full; but it surrounded him with a certain formality which to many women would have been tantalizing. Not to her, because in her dreams she had not conceived of so great an intimacy of body and spirit as had come to her in these three months.

And now they were almost home. She did not ask where they were going, and got into the carriage that was waiting for them, a little surprised that her father and Anne had not met them.

"I told them we would see them to-morrow," said Eugene. And Frederica knew that she was no longer one of her father's family, but one of his.

The streets were deserted in the dusk, and Harden looked out at them with an expression that Frederica could not understand. It was the first of May, and their

Digitized by Google

carriage was going through the street where the great labor parade had passed. All that was left of it was cluttered sidewalk, bits of wind-swept bunting, and silence. It was like the thoroughfares of the past—empty of the ideals and illusions which had brought the crowds for a short time. Earlier in the day an idea had surged up and down, had marched and sung, but later it was disintegrated and scattered among alleys and avenues. The street was now a forlorn streak like a dash written before the words "and now?" It is very dreary to follow in the wake of a people's excitement.

Frederica touched Eugene's hand sympathetically. "You wanted to be here this morning very much, didn't you?" she asked.

"Yes."

"You ought not to have—humored me; I was not sick enough to delay; it *was* only a cold."

"But I could not risk your illness."

"I don't want ever to interfere with your plans, Eugene." She spoke almost timidly.

"A woman can't help that."

"Oh!" she said in surprise, for there was a hint of resignation in his voice. "You believe that I may come between you and your work?"

"Very often." He turned as though to kiss her, but she felt he was seeking a compensation for what she might possibly deprive him of, and she managed to look out of the carriage window without his guessing that she had evaded a caress from him. It was the first break in her unthinking happiness as his wife: that he believed she would interfere with his work.

The day they had planned to start home she had had a chill and a little fever, and he had insisted upon wait-

Digitized by Google

ing until she was better. At the time she had not guessed that it meant a serious break in his plans, for he was so quiet and matter-of-fact about it. Now that she had discovered his disappointment it was too late.

For six months he had been working in every way for the demonstration of an accepted idea on this first of May. He had spoken of the day as the first one of a new age, and had planned even the details of the demonstration itself. Frederica had almost forgotten the significance of the day, carried away as she was by her personal happiness. Now she was recalling it in the dusk, and in her self-accusation could find no words to give to him. She sat silent until the carriage stopped and she saw that they were at the Leland.

Everyone there turned about to look at them as they came in, for they were an unusual pair. Eugene's definite lines and fine, striking appearance, Frederica's elusiveness both in line and color, were very marked side by side. The clerk addressed her as Mrs. Harden, and she recognized him as the one she had seen that night she had come over from the West Side. The boy carried their bags to Harden's old suite. Just inside the door her heart almost stopped beating, so vivid was her remembrance of her former entrance. The room was the same, even to Eugene's personal belongings, but there were roses instead of chrysanthemums. In the adjoining bedroom were quantities of flowers, too; in there she breathed more freely because there were no associations.

Dinner was served for them in front of the fire. While the waiter was placing the dishes, and while Eugene was dressing in the other room, Frederica moved about the room looking at the photographs and books, asking a few questions, and taking the answers very seriously. Now

Digitized by Google

and then she paused wherever she happened to be and listened. How strange it was to have a husband in the next room singing snatches while he dressed! When he stopped short she knew it was because he had met with some difficulty in tying his cravat or putting in his cuff buttons. Eugene came out upon her in one of these fits of attention, and laughed when she told him that the only time he seemed a very real person was when he was occupied with something else.

"When you're looking at me the way you are now, you are not there and I am not here, but there is something just between these two places—just a—just a blended sensation."

At their dinner she was full of gayety, but afterwards sat a long time looking at the fire, elbow on knee, chin in hand; and he not knowing at all what she was thinking, sat watching her and delaying the moment when he knew that he must seize her in his arms and question what was in her mind. The quiet, however, was broken by a knock at the door. Frederica jumped. It was like the knock that night when the world had entered with its necessity of convention. Eugene went to the door and took the card that was offered.

"I will come down," he said. "It is very strange that I should have a caller, for no one except the clerk knew of my arrival to-day. But I must go down." He kissed her and left her in front of the fire.

After a few moments she roused herself from her half thoughtful reverie and glanced about the room. From outside came the muffled sounds of the night, but in the room it was very quiet. She rose and moved about the room, looking again at the books and pictures. Many of the books were in French and German. The inscriptions

Digitized by Google

on the photographs were for the most part in one or the other. Frederica began to realize that Eugene had belonged to a world whose speech she could not have understood had she been in it. It was not pleasant to think of. One of the photographs was that of a particularly striking woman whose dark eyes and hair and plump shoulders seemed beautiful to Frederica. Yet holding the picture at a distance she decided that, although the woman was beautiful, she would not have liked her. The inscription underneath was a long one in French, but the date was the only thing she could read. It was but two years old.

Frederica put down the photograph and went to the long mirror and looked steadily at herself. She did not care for what she saw. It was too vague and colorless a girl who looked back at her. There were shadows of weariness under her eyes, and her hair was not in the order it should be.

She sat down again in front of the fire and waited; it seemed a long time since he had left the room. In a childish sort of way she tried to think what she should feel if he never came back. Suppose sometime he should go out of the door, and she should wait and wait and in the end never see him? Would all these months, all his love be like a dream, or would it become her reality? She pictured herself back in her little prim room with its few bits of furniture and its outlook on a back porch. If she were in that room to-night, would she feel just as she used to when she crept under the blankets and found a comfortable place for her head on a corner of the pillow? Or would she be very lonely and unhappy? She could not tell, for neither one thing nor the other seemed real.

But there was reality in her wish that he should come

Digitized by Google

up from downstairs. Suddenly her heart stopped. Suppose the man downstairs had come to tell him that he was known to be married to a woman in Austria! The suspicion which had had but a moment's existence months before, as she supposed, was full of life, and without any reason, unless it was because she was in the room where he had told her that he was not free, and that he had been tempted to pretend to her that he *was*. Yet at the same instant that her mind touched upon such a possibility, the passion that he had roused in her came to conscious life. She sprang to her feet and covered her eyes with her hands, her muscles all tense. The door swung to upon the Frederica that had been.

Harden found her walking up and down the room. When he came in she looked at him with frightened eyes.

"Who was it?" she asked.

"Sloane's foreman," he answered. "There is another strike, and he seems to be the chief trouble-maker." Then he paused and said doubtfully: "There is something I do not understand. There are a great many new men in the yards."

"I was afraid that you were not coming back to me," said Frederica in a suppressed voice, going toward him as though she were to take him unawares. She stopped before she reached him.

"You will always come back to me whenever you go away—won't you?"

"Freda? What is it?"

"I think it's—love," she said.

He was going to take her in his arms, but she looked up at him. "Don't just now," she said. "I want to get used to myself, first."

Whether or not he felt her wish as serious, he tried to

Digitized by Google

distract his attention from her and picked up the mail that was waiting for him. As he opened and read the letters she watched him; her eyes gloried in every little detail of his appearance with a new sense of possession.

Once when he looked up, for he was not seeing what he read at all, and was using all his will to respect her mood whatever it might be, she said:

"I must learn French and German."

"Yes," he said, wondering why she should think of that.

One of his letters did catch his attention and held it, so that for a moment he forgot her. She watched his interest and grew jealous. From where she was standing by the fireplace she went to him and put her arms about his neck and her lips on his cheek.

"Can't your letters wait until morning?" she asked.

"Woman! Woman!" he laughed, drawing her to him, the last effort at restraint over.

Frederica started at the word. It capped her new self-consciousness.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

THE FIRE

THE next morning the papers were full of the big fire in the Sloanes' lumber yard. The fire had begun shortly after midnight and had burned its way through the most valuable piles of lumber before it was discovered, and all night it had been burning and had given no chance for the search of the incendiary.

Outside the committee room of the Lumbermen's Union excitement was running high. Groups of men were reading the different accounts in the papers and discussing the effect of this disaster upon the strike. It was not more important for Sloane to know who set the fire than it was for the strikers. Some of them wanted to go out at once to hunt down one or two suspected persons who were supposed to have a grudge against the union, but all waited for Gustav Lange, who had become the powerful leader since the beginning of the recent trouble. Occasionally one of the men in the committee hall expressed a covert joy that there had been this destruction of their employer's wealth, but such remarks were quickly silenced by others who knew that a word dropped incautiously might implicate the whole union.

Digitized by Google

At nine o'clock Lange came in and was approached by a half dozen of the noisiest talkers and questioned as to what should be done in the matter.

"You know as much about it as I do, boys," he said. He had come in with his usual swagger, but seemed anxious to get through into his committee room. As he stood unlocking the door, he turned to those nearest him and said loudly, "The devil's to pay if we don't find the scab who did it. Sloane will accuse the union and run the whole lot of us into jail."

He went into the committee room alone, leaving the discussion to its vague generalities outside. After he had closed the door behind him, all the bluster and indifference of his manner dropped from him. He walked restlessly up and down the room, looking out of the window and glancing at the watch which he held in his hand.

At exactly half-past nine there was a knock on the door, and he jumped as though he had not been expecting anyone. He opened it quickly, however, and let in John Scanlan, who was followed by the noise of discussion and the smell of tobacco. A few men looked curiously into the room before the door was shut, but Lange made a sign that he did not care to have them come in.

Scanlan held his head high and smiled. "Well?" he asked in a tone that showed he expected approval.

Lange rushed toward him. "You damned fire-breeding scoundrel!" he said in a suppressed voice which was far more sinister than any shouting could have been. "Why didn't you follow my directions?"

Scanlan's astonishment kept him from replying.

"You've ruined me!" said Lange, grabbing the man's arm.

Digitized by Google

Scanlan spoke slowly. "You ain't got no interest in the lumber yard, have you?"

"Good God!" said Lange, "why didn't you follow my directions and start the fire in the northeast corner where that old second-hand stuff was thrown?"

"You never said where I should start it." Scanlan began to raise his voice.

"Didn't tell you! Where are the directions you got yesterday?"

"Didn't get any," answered Scanlan.

Lange was petrified. "I mailed them to you day before yesterday in the evening."

Scanlan shook his head dumbly. "The postman couldn't have left it. I never get any mail."

Neither of the two men spoke for a moment, and then Lange looked Scanlan straight in the eye. "You wanted to set that fire where it would do most damage! You're lying about that letter."

Scanlan shook his fist in the other man's face. "I've done your dirty work for you, and I've had my reasons for being glad to do it, but I won't stand your calling me a liar!"

At this moment there was a noise outside, and Lange turned to Scanlan. "The best thing you can do to-day is to keep with the men and talk loud about the disgrace to the union that this has happened. Be the first one to start and hunt for the man who did it. Not that I much care whether you get caught or not!"

Scanlan said nothing. Fear was beginning to show under his anger. He turned and walked slowly to the door, thinking deeply. Just as he put his hand on the door knob, Lange came up close behind him.

"If they catch you, hold your tongue!"

Digitized by Google

Scanlan looked at him and went out.

Again Lange walked up and down the room, apparently unable to decide what to do; and again he looked at his watch, and left to go to Harden's house.

At Eugene Harden's house, which, unknown to Freda, he had bought for her on the North Side, Maggie Flanagan was dusting the library for the twentieth time that morning. It was a large well-lighted room, and its furniture and hangings had been chosen by Harden before he went away. It had a foreign look to it, in spite of the fact that Dr. Hartwell and Anne had arranged the things. A large double door led into the hall; there were long French windows, an open fireplace in which a fire was burning, and the room was in perfect order, except for packing boxes full of books which stood near the bookshelves at the back of the room. Every principle of dusting which had been inculcated by Mrs. Parrish was being put into practice. There was no soubrette flourishing of gay feather duster, but a sober mind and righteous removal of foreign particles with a piece of cheese cloth. To be sure, the cheese cloth was feather-stitched in red and belonged to the set which Anne had made. Maggie was on her knees rubbing the rounds of a chair when Mrs. Schneider came in from the kitchen where she had been helping Anne, and untied a bundle she carried. From her knees Maggie looked with disapproval at the knit lace squares which appeared.

"What they need is vases, Mrs. Schneider, not tidies. Tidies ain't in style."

"Ach, ja!" said Mrs. Schneider, carefully putting one of them on an upholstered chair back. "It's against their heads making der new furniture schmutzig—dirty.

Digitized by Google

When I was verheirathet — I had many schöner als dese."

Maggie folded her dusting cloth and put it in her pocket. "Did you make 'em yourself?" she asked.

"Ja, gewiss—sure. All since der time Miss Freda called upstairs, 'Oh, Mrs. Schneider, I am to be married already next month'—her cheeks red mit joy und gladness." Mrs. Schneider laid two more tidies on two more chairs. "Gott! What for good luck for a girl to marry a rich man und nicht zu wissen! Gott!"

Maggie was silent a moment. "*I* knew he was rich, but riches ain't—everything."

"How did you know?" said Mrs. Schneider.

Maggie hesitated. "Some one told me—some one who used to know him when he was a foreigner and lived to home."

The effect of the fourth tidy made a strong appeal to Mrs. Schneider. She stepped back and looked at it admiringly. "Schön, nicht? Nice?" she asked.

Maggie looked critical. "D'you like it?"

Mrs. Schneider crossed the room to slip the fifth under an imported jardinière. "But for Miss Freda nicht zu beautiful. You stay by her and her man?"

"Miss Anne says Mr. Harden may have somebody else for the place, but if he hasn't, I will."

"It's viel besser for you als workin' in a store, Maggie," said Mrs. Schneider, looking at her meaningly. "Viel besser, but nicht so easy." Then, apparently dissatisfied with Maggie's enjoyment of her decorative efforts, she added: "I like to haf Dr. Hartwell come und see."

She went to the door and called him from the adjoining room, where he was unpacking Harden's books. When

Digitized by Google

he came in Mrs. Schneider indicated the tidies with pride —"Schön, nicht? Little presents for Miss Freda."

Dr. Hartwell was amazed, but recovered himself quickly and said: "You are very kind, Mrs. Schneider, but wouldn't it be better to—to put them all in a bundle and—surprise her?"

She laughed. "Nein; it's a grösser surprise to see der tidies all out. Dutzend tidies are little over against what you haf been by us. Ten years," she turned to Maggie, "und always busy mit kindness."

Anne came in with a big box of flowers. "Get me something to put these in, Maggie," she said, and then she explained to the doctor: "They are from Alec Sloane. He shows a very beautiful spirit." She saw the tidies. "Why, Mrs. Schneider!"

"Schön, nicht?" said the German woman, who was folding the paper they had come in.

Dr. Hartwell was surveying the room with real pleasure in his face. "Her mother used to be afraid that if she grew up on the West Side, in such a poor part of town, that she would never have an opportunity to marry well."

Anne said nothing. She was always indignant at the idea of Mrs. Hartwell's not having sympathized with her husband's work. He did not expect any answer, and seated himself in the leather armchair with the remark that he would be tempted to come often in order to sit in it.

"Und jump der babies, so," said Mrs. Schneider as she went out to make Vienna Kaffeekuchen for Mr. Harden.

Maggie turned from the window in great excitement. "Wisht you could see! They're coming!"

Digitized by Google

Dr. Hartwell jumped to his feet. Anne shoved the empty box and wrapping paper under the sofa out of sight. "And you haven't set the table, Maggie!"

"It's not them, but—" She ran out of the room to answer the bell and came back almost immediately, followed by three men carrying a floral offering in the shape of a monstrous horseshoe in "everlastings," which were suggestive of a funeral. Maggie announced the men with dignity. "The committee," she said on the threshold.

Dr. Hartwell shook hands with the foremost one, who was looking for a suitable place to put the horseshoe. "The men wanted to show Mr. Harden what they think of him."

Anne made room on a side table. "Lean it against the wall here," she said.

Steiner, the head of the committee, put the horseshoe in the prominent place and regarded it. "The luck will run out the two ends," he said, "but they put the words on wrong side up."

As he turned to go, Dr. Hartwell asked him if he had any further news about the fire in the lumber yards. "It is a dreadful thing," he said, "destruction of property—a dreadful thing."

Steiner shook his head. "We don't know anything but what the papers said, that it was started by some man in the union. That is one of their lies to get the sympathy away from us workingmen. We have more sense than to start a fire."

"Yes, yes," said Dr. Hartwell, "I must say that I have never met any of your friends who would be likely to do such a thing as that. But we must find the offender. The laws of this country must be obeyed."

Digitized by Google

Then he asked him about the strike. But Steiner was noncommittal and evidently desirous of going back at once to the committee.

Before he was out the front door Anne gave way to her feelings: "The room is ruined," she said. "Those tidies and that!"

Dr. Hartwell said that he liked the sentiment they expressed. "It is really wonderful what a hold Eugene has on the men."

"Yes," said Anne, with a tinge of nonagreement to the word.

"You can't get over your dislike for him—can you?"

"No," said Anne. Then she went to the door. "Are you going to give up *your* work and do his?"

"No, indeed! No, indeed!" said Dr. Hartwell. "I must stick to the chapel—look after their souls—on weekdays—well, on weekdays I shall help Eugene look after their bodies. They made a great showing yesterday. A hundred thousand men, Anne—a hundred thousand men marching for one idea."

"Would it be possible for you to live here with—them, and yet keep up your work at the chapel?"

"Why, Anne!" It was not a question, but an ejaculation of complete surprise. Anne explained hurriedly.

"I don't see how I can stay on at your house, with no one else there—it isn't conventional."

"Nonsense," replied the doctor. "You startled me. I thought there was some *real* reason."

"That is real to me," replied Anne, and went out of the room, and the doctor looked after her in perplexity. Then he went to the door and called Maggie.

"Get me the hatchet, will you," he said; and when she had brought it he ripped off the top of the wooden

Digitized by Google

cases and began putting the books on the shelves, Maggie helping him. Once the doctor looked thoughtfully at her. "I hope, Maggie"—he paused and she seemed a little frightened by the seriousness of his voice—"I hope you are proving yourself worthy of Freda's—of my daughter's confidence in you."

Maggie brightened. "Oh, yes," she said. "Mrs. Parrish never asked me any questions, and I just stayed there and worked ever since the day Miss Freda took me there."

"And you never see—that man?"

"No!" said Maggie. "I've never seen him since."

Then the door bell rang and she was glad of the interruption, but when she came back her little Irish face was drawn and white. She was followed by Gustav Lange, who stopped on the threshold.

"Is Mr. Harden here?" he asked.

"I told you he was not," said Maggie.

"Then I'll wait," said Lange.

"Ah, Mr. Lange," said Dr. Hartwell, "you've come to get Mr. Harden's advice about the strike? But he has not arrived yet. We expect him any moment."

Lange said nothing, and Dr. Hartwell asked him to sit down.

"Mr. Sloane has often told me," he said, "that he could depend on you, but he must be much disappointed."

"I am a good union man," said Lange. "I have to stand for the union."

"But you made a contract, didn't you?" said the doctor.

"Mr. Sloane broke it," said Lange.

"I am afraid," said the doctor, "that you are not quite fair." Then he turned to Maggie. "I am going now

Digitized by Google

to meet them. I was to call at the hotel and come back with them so that it would be a complete surprise for Mrs. Harden. Make yourself at home," he said to Lange, and went out.

Maggie had been dusting books with her back to Lange, but now she turned. "'Tisn't right you should be here when they come."

Lange took a step forward. "Why not?" He seized her arm and looked at her suspiciously.

It seemed impossible for Maggie to put her reason into words, but he kept his eyes on hers, and she finally said:

"You don't like him; and when he comes here, he'd ought to be with people who like him."

Lange did not release her arm, and she was trembling. "What makes you think I don't like him?"

Maggie stared up at him without replying.

"What makes you?" he said, lowering his voice and looking at her steadily.

"You told me so."

"When?" Lange was startled.

"That night after you was made foreman at Sloane's."

"I was drunk, wasn't I?"

"Not very." Maggie backed away from him and leaned against the recently decorated table. The arch of the horseshoe framed her curly hair and was not whiter than her face. Lange came in front of her with compelling eyes. "Tell me what I said."

She shook her head. "You used awful language."

"What did I say?" he reiterated, coming closer.

"I don't remember the words," said Maggie, pushing back against the table. "You were swearing."

Lange looked relieved. "I always swear at everybody when I'm drunk."

Digitized by Google

"What do you want—to-day?" she asked.

Lange leaned forward and kissed her suddenly. "To see you."

She drew her little figure erect. "Don't you ever touch me again!" she said. "Miss Freda is coming back."

Anne called to Maggie, who ran out of the room as though pursued. Lange, left to himself, walked about the room. Then he sat down, lit a cigarette, and at once seemed at ease, without any semblance of the workingman about him. At the sound of the bell, however, he assumed the embarrassed air of his former interview, sat on the edge of his chair, and held his soft hat in his two hands between his knees. When the door opened he jumped to his feet, for Alexander Sloane was there and telling Maggie that he must see Dr. Hartwell at once.

"He's just gone," said Maggie, "to meet Mr. Harden and Miss Freda. But Miss Anne is here." And before Sloane could say whether or not he wished to see Miss Forester, she had disappeared.

When Sloane saw Lange, he stopped in surprise. "Why are you here?" he asked.

"On business," said Lange.

"A fine piece of work last night."

"It wasn't my fault," said Lange. "Some one who had a grudge against you did the thing."

"But you picked him," said Sloane, coming toward Lange, with growing anger in his face. "You are responsible, you understand. You will have to take the consequences."

"I think not," said Lange. "I think that you would hardly consider it good policy to make me take the consequences."

Digitized by Google

"You have destroyed thousands of dollars' worth of lumber, and you'll have to pay for it."

Lange looked quite indifferent and unmoved, except that his hands were ill at ease and restless. "Let your combine, let the men who are making a cat's-paw of you pay for it."

Sloane turned and looked at him. "What do you mean?" he said.

"You know," said Lange. "You have not taken me into your confidence, but I'm on to the game. You've got to destroy the unions in order to stand in with the trust. They've put the job up to you, and you've put it up to me, and I can prove it. Why are you here?" he asked, becoming in turn the dictatorial one as he saw that Sloane had not denied his statement.

The door opened and Alec Sloane, breathless, came in. "It came just after you left." He handed a thick square letter with a foreign stamp to his father.

Mr. Sloane tore it open and glanced through it. "You were right," he said to Lange, without any animosity in his voice now. It was almost as though he had shaken hands with him. Then he turned to his son.

"This," he said, indicating the letter, "corroborates Lange's story about Harden. I didn't more than half believe you," he said to Lange, whose face had lighted up with the same look of victory as in the lumber yard when he had so frightened Maggie.

Alec looked from one to the other, and his father met the inquiry. "Our foreign friend has a wife in Austria."

"Hungary," corrected Lange.

"Harden?" asked Alec, who stood petrified.

His father seemed to enjoy the impression he had made upon him. "You need not be so surprised," he said.

Digitized by Google

"I told you he was crooked. Any man who comes into a free country and meddles in its business affairs, stirs up discontent among workingmen—is always crooked. When you first told me about his visits to the Hartwells, I asked you what his motive was."

Alec looked apprehensively at Lange, who was standing with a pretense of indifference by the fire.

"Lange knows about it," said his father. "He was the one to put me on to it—but I wasn't absolutely sure until I got this letter from our representative at Vienna."

"You have come to tell Dr. Hartwell?" asked Alec, beginning to walk up and down.

"Naturally," said Sloane. "I shall tell him first, and then give the story out and let Harden face the music. It will be the last of his influence in the labor circles or any other circles in this town."

Alec faced his father. "It will break them all up. Freda—loves him."

"The sooner she gets over that the better, and she can hardly expect us to feel much sympathy on that account."

Alec was moved. He walked over and looked at the floral piece without seeing it. Lange had turned his back on the two and was watching the passers-by on the street. His presence there was far from agreeable to the younger man; yet it was not in him to accept his father's plan without protest, although argument was seldom successful.

"Why don't you give him a chance to get out quietly? That will serve your purpose, and not hurt the Hartwells."

"He's got to be destroyed entirely—not a shred left to his reputation."

"But think of Freda!"

Digitized by Google

"Why should I? Did she think of you? Didn't she let you think she was going to marry you and then go off with him?"

Alec straightened and looked at his father with a new dignity. "I can fight my own battles. I never complained, did I? Besides, it was my own fault. I should not have let things drift. The man who wants a woman has the right to seize her. I had always kept my hands behind my back for fear of making her afraid, of startling her. He had more sense—and won at the start, before he had known her as many days as I had years."

Alec's emotion and his very unusual excitement of speech, instead of softening, had the opposite effect upon his father, whose resentment was deepened against Harden. Lange, too, was watching Alec with a strange look in his eye.

Mr. Sloane put his hand on Alec's shoulder, not with tenderness, but with determination. "My boy," he said, "I shall fight your battles if I wish, and I tell you I do not care how much Freda Hartwell pays for this. She fooled you——"

"No!" said Alec.

"Moreover," continued his father, "as an American business man who believes in his rights and in his independence, I have got to beat him."

"But to come to his house, father!" Indignation burned in Alec's words.

"I came to see Dr. Hartwell."

Through the hall door they heard Maggie's cry of delight, and a moment after, Frederica in her long traveling coat stood there.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

THE SUSPICION CONFIRMED

FREDERICA stood for a moment in surprise on the threshold. Maggie was close behind her and showed no inclination to come further into the room, although she was quivering with excitement. Frederica looked from Mr. Sloane to Alec and then to Lange. Then she went forward impulsively to Mr. Sloane.

"This is very beautiful of you," she said, "to be here when I come." She took Alec's hand. "Is your mother here, too?" she asked. "Where is everybody?"

At that moment Anne came in from the adjoining room and rushed to Freda with outstretched arms. "Why, where is your—husband? Where is Mr. Harden?" she asked.

Frederica laughed. "He is at the headquarters. He is beginning already to neglect me."

She did not seem to be conscious of the embarrassment on the part of the men who were there. She was looking about the room in a sort of childish surprise, taking off her gloves and smiling.

"Eugene telephoned me and told me to come here, that this was our house, and that he would come as soon as he could." Suddenly she turned to Lange. "Are you waiting to see him?" she said.

Digitized by Google

"Yes," said Lange.

"Don't you think you'd better go, then, to where he is?"

The moment after, before Lange had left the room, she went toward Mr. Sloane. "Eugene is going to make your men go back to work," she said. "He said that he would have them ready to meet you on your terms."

Lange spoke quickly: "The men won't give in." He was reassuring Sloane, and unfortunately his tone was conciliatory. Alec caught the significance of it, and spoke with a certain authority to the Hungarian.

"If the men want to come back to us on our terms, we will settle with them, not with you."

"Alec!" said his father sharply.

Lange left.

Anne was shaking hands with Mr. Sloane. "Can't you wait and take lunch with us?" she asked. "It will be splendid. You have no idea how afraid I've been that all these dreadful questions of labor unions were going to come between your family and ours." She said "ours" with a little pride in her voice, for she had been thinking of Dr. Hartwell's look when she left him in the library.

"I am too busy," said Sloane genially. Then turning to his son, "You will come with me?"

"Not just now, father," said Alec.

Alexander Sloane had a sense of holding the whole situation in his hand. He did not even resent his son's staying behind; for facts were facts, and he had the proof of them. All that he had felt, all that he had suffered as Alec's father, was little beside the anxiety which he now had. His whole future as a business man rested upon the outcome of this strike. The union must be destroyed. To that end he had made use of Lange, not realizing that Lange was making much greater use of

Digitized by Google

him. By making the Hungarian a foreman and getting him into his power, as he supposed, by a gift of money, he had been able to control the union itself for some time. He had quietly, one at a time, dismissed some of the old, steady-going men on one pretext or another, and taken in a less sober, reliable crowd—men who would be likely to call loudly for the fight should there be any chance for one. Then he had broken the contract in order to bring things to an issue, and he had practically pledged himself to the other lumbermen (who had a gentlemen's understanding among themselves as to conducting their business) that he would break up the lumbermen's union, which had already begun to affect the conditions of the industry, and to threaten the complete powers of the employers. He had been much disturbed when he heard of Harden's return, and felt that discredit must be thrown upon the union at once, in order that he could refuse to hold out against them.

But it seemed now that Lange had bungled the job. Instead of a small fire, which would have served the purpose, he had been put to a loss of many thousands of dollars. Then, too, he was beginning to be a little distrustful of Lange's loyalty. There was something mysterious in the man's behavior. Sloane had taken him at first to be rather stupid and open to bribes for the sake of the money itself; but he was too keen a man not to discover shortly that Lange was playing a part, and that there were some motives underneath which had not been declared. The encounter this morning at Harden's house led him to believe that Lange might go over to Harden's side, if it were necessary to do that in order to protect himself. Then the game would be up.

Frederica's unexpected entrance had robbed him of his

Digitized by Google

wits, and he was only too glad to have an excuse for departure. As he went away he felt a new confidence, for Frederica had practically ordered Lange out of the house, and he knew that the man's hurt pride would be a timely barrier between him and his siding with Harden.

Anne felt it might be embarrassing to leave Freda and Alec together, but he had evidently decided to stay whether invited or not, so she tried to make it all seem natural by fussing around and complaining about the way the room had been transformed into a demonstration of affection. Frederica patted one of the tidies, and Mrs. Schneider appeared in time to see her doing so. She was wiping her flour-covered hands on her kitchen apron. A moment after laughter came from Frederica's lips as Mrs. Schneider threw the floury apron upon the floor and embraced her, saying: "Gott, Miss Freda, was for a kleine Hausfrau; I haf baked Kaffeekuchen for ihr Mann, der new husband."

Then Anne, in great concern about the lunch, confided to Alec that the cook had not arrived and so she must disappear.

"You will wait?" she said.

"Not for lunch," he answered; "but, for God's sake, take that woman with you. I must see Freda alone!"

Anne showed dismay, but called to Mrs. Schneider to come and help her, and left the two alone. Frederica was embarrassed, so she talked rather fast and uncertainly about her own surprise at the house and everything.

"But your father didn't come to welcome me after all, did he?" she asked.

"No," answered Alec, "he came to see your father—on—on an important matter."

Frederica, who was leaning over the inscription on

Digitized by Google

the horseshoe, straightened. "What is it?" she asked compellingly, for she jumped at once to the conclusion that Mr. Sloane had come about her father's advocacy of Eugene's work.

Alec folded his arms and took a breath of deep resolve. Everything that was boyish had left his face. He stood facing the slight, delicate girl he had expected to marry. His eyes were fixed on hers, whether to give or gain support you could not tell.

"Sit down, Freda," he said.

She was impressed by the seriousness of his manner and obeyed him.

"Eugene knows all about the—fire, and he will do what is right," she said.

Alec started a moment. "Oh, the fire," he said. "I'm not here about that."

Alec looked steadily at her, and she, not knowing why he had come, could make no beginning for him. Finally he spoke, his eyes fixed on hers.

"Would you go back to your father, Freda, without any—any trouble, if you thought it was best?"

She did not seem to understand his question, and simply looked at him.

"If I told you, Freda, that you had been deceived—awfully deceived, would you go quietly home and let me look after the rest of it?"

"What do you mean?" she asked with white lips.

"I hate to tell you, Freda—you don't know how I hate to."

"But tell me," she said.

"You're not really married, Freda. He is married to some one else—in Austria."

She did not faint nor cry out as he expected, but sat

Digitized by Google

perfectly still with her eyes on his. He stood the look as long as he could, and then he spoke again:

"If you'll go home from here—*now*, I'll keep it all quiet and you need not be talked about at all. I came to you first, because the most depends upon you."

He put his hand over her clenched one on the arm of her chair, but she jerked hers away. "Who told you?" she asked.

Alec thought that the way she was taking his news showed that she was to be depended on, and he took a breath of relief.

"Gustav Lange told my father and my father wrote to Vienna."

Frederica repeated Lange's name as though it confirmed some great suspicion. Alec thought she was stunned, and waited for her reply. But it was hard for him to endure the continuing silence, and he urged her attention upon his first request. "If you will go to your father's now, I will go with you—and explain."

Frederica rose and clasped her hands behind her. "I don't want you to explain," she said. "It is all a lie—Gustav Lange's lie!"

"We have other proof," said Alec, feeling combat ahead. "We have papers from Austria."

Frederica looked hard at the floor. She was enveloped in a calm which Alec could not understand because he did not know she was concerned with ideas far different from those with which he was occupied. He thought he had shocked her belief and trust in Eugene Harden and that there must be some tears or complaints. Frederica lifted her head and looked at him with her characteristic intensity.

"If I don't believe it is so, you can't make me believe

Digitized by Google

by showing papers—from anywhere. So you need not tell anyone else about it."

Alec was amazed. "You've got to believe, and I shall tell your father," he said.

"No," said Frederica, "you shall not. *I* married Eugene; my father has nothing to say about us now; our marriage is *our* affair." She was speaking with perfect ease and decision.

"Frederica Hartwell!" Then he paused, struck by what he had said. "That *is* your name still, under the law," he added.

"I don't care about laws," she said.

"You're a child! You're not fit to meet this thing." Tenderness crept into his voice. "It isn't fair that this should have come to you! And that's why I want to make it as easy for you as I can. We can pretend that you left him. He will go away; and after a while we will say that you have gotten your divorce. No one will ask any questions, and there wouldn't be any scandal."

The truth of his insistence began to have its effect on Frederica, and it frightened her that there was to be any discussion.

"I don't see why you should have so many plans," she said, flushing.

He forgot his pity for her in resentment that she had put him outside her life.

"Perhaps not," he replied; "but I was planning for your good—and your father's. You can act on my plans or else let my father carry out his idea of exposing your —husband to the people of this town and to the unions who admire him." Alec's voice held an undertone of angry sarcasm.

Frederica's very thoughts were paralyzed. It was not

Digitized by Google

her undisputed right, then, to stay with Eugene Harden if she wished to. It lay in Alexander Sloane's power to talk of it to the world, to use it to destroy Eugene's influence in his chosen work, to make him subject to insult and disgrace. For in a moment the whole situation was clear to her.

"Could your father be so—contemptible?" she asked, her eyes flashing.

Alec grew red. "We'll not allow you to have anything to do with such a scoundrel."

Frederica came toward him. "Alec Sloane," she said, "you may go and tell your father that I intend to stay with—Eugene Harden—that no one will believe *his* story."

Alec straightened, and looked at Frederica in astonishment. "You will stay with a man who is not your husband?"

"If I stay with him," she said, "no one will believe your father when he says that he *is not*."

"I've told you already that he has proofs," said Alec, beginning to show anger. He had expected tears and womanly dismay, and had felt himself as the one to whom she would turn for defense. Instead of that he was meeting a stubborn, an almost placid Frederica. She said in answer to his last remarks:

"Probably these proofs are a part of the business methods of your father, too."

He turned to go. "I shall tell Dr. Hartwell and let him use his influence with you. I ought to have seen him first."

Her confusion of thought released her from the repellent attitude she had held, and he believed her to be moved by his last words.

Digitized by Google

"I can do everything for you, Freda. I could kill him for this." He came close to her.

"You're glad of this story—you and your father—and I was just thinking what a friend you were, and that you were noble." Suddenly she began to walk up and down. "Listen," she said, "if this is true, this story, it's your father's fault that I am here."

Alec looked at her in amazement. What sense could lie in such a statement? She stopped abruptly, for she had reached her determination to tell him.

"I went to Eugene's room at the hotel," she said, "when your father had made mine go back on his word. I went to ask him not to let my father be humiliated, but to break his engagement at the chapel. Do you remember?" She was a straight and rigid woman speaking.

He nodded.

"And I made love to Eugene. I asked him to let me go with him—without the law— Yes!" she said, seeing disbelief in his face. "I—I begged him."

"That does not excuse him, Freda. He's a man, you're only a girl."

"Well, he would not take me," said Frederica proudly. "He told me the truth, that he was married."

Alec's face grew stern.

"And after that even I begged him!"

"Freda!"

"I—I thought I loved him."

"And now you don't?" A kind of exultation leaped into his words.

"Now," said Frederica, "I know that that was but a shadow of love—I didn't know what loving him was then. I *do* now. But he told me that his work must be first,

Digitized by Google

that even if I had the courage he wouldn't take me—on account of his work. And he told me"—she spoke very slowly now—"that if anyone knew I was in his rooms they could ruin him. And your father came just as I was going."

She paused, and Alec raised questioning eyes to her, for he had seated himself.

"And your father said that he didn't trust him, and that it was dreadful for me to be found there, and so—I lied and said I was engaged to Eugene—to protect him—to keep him from your father's story."

"Oh, Freda!" Pity shook Alec's voice.

Frederica looked at him in surprise. "You needn't be sorry. I'm glad." She lifted her head. "Suppose I had gone home." Then she came nearer to him, and clasped her hands behind her, and spoke with a ring. "But the next day he came to me and said that he was free, that there was nothing to prevent us—getting married. And Alec—I'm going to say it to you—I never said it to him—I thought for a minute that perhaps he was trying to protect me by a lie (just as I had him), because I had been hunting for work all day, for some way to get free of dependence upon your father—and I was so late coming home that they were frightened, and he was there—and frightened. But it was only—a flash of suspicion. After that I trusted him. I know he is free!"

"Did he show you any proof?" asked Alec.

"Proof?" she answered. "Oh, you don't know him. He never explains."

"But you must ask him for proof now," said Alec, rising and beginning to walk now that Freda was quiet. She looked at him as though she were trying to realize something.

Digitized by Google

"Why, if I asked him for proofs, he would think I did not trust him—and—and it would be all over."

"God!" said Alec.

She was on the defensive in a moment. "He's that kind of a man. He demands his freedom, his right not to be questioned." Never in her thoughts before had she so characterized him. She felt a sort of terror that she might be compelled to try to break his reserve.

Alec was beginning to lose self-control. "If I should bring his wife here—to you—what would you do then?"

It was the first time that Frederica had met the idea of a flesh and blood woman who might exist—perhaps no longer his wife, but still with the memory of having been. She contracted all over and grew white and held her hands clinched. "I—I might kill her," she said under her breath. The animal instinct of jealousy was as full of life and strength as though she had been nourishing it for years. Alec was held by what he saw.

"And you wouldn't trust him any more?" he said.

"I—I"—she was struggling for self-control, for the control of her thoughts, for the blood that was in her was leaping wildly. "I don't know," she said. "But when he comes home to-day—I shall know when I look in his eyes—for it's as though you *had* brought her here." She was seeing the woman in the photograph, the woman with black eyes and hair and plump shoulders. Alec was watching her, and she seemed suddenly to be swept out of the picture he had made.

"Why does your father want to spread this story?" she asked.

"I have not spoken of what my father wants," he replied.

"But you would not do it—yourself."

Digitized by Google

He made no reply to that, and she took advantage of the pause which seemed indecision. "You would not want to make me unhappy."

"Your honor, Freda!"

"I must not think about that. I must think what this will mean to him."

Alec had reached the end of his endurance; he turned to go. But Frederica felt that she was losing some chance and sprang forward. "Wait, Alec, wait!" she said.

"Why?" he asked, anger in every line of his face.

"You must help me think. No!"—she contradicted her own appeal. "I must be alone to think. I—I can't think. There is something besides me in this question. It is a terrible game between your father and me. And you will side with him—of course. You will help him spread this story—you are going away now—to do it. You won't give me any time to think." She was making an appeal to him, and that was something.

"I can't see why you need any time," he said.

"Because—because if he is disgraced it will destroy all that he has done for—the people, for the workingmen, for the poor, for society. It will all be lost!" She went to Alec and put her hand on his arm. "Can't you make it possible for me to have time to plan some way? I will do whatever is right. I promise you. Can't you keep your father from saying anything until to-morrow?"

Alec looked at the wall opposite, but he put his hand over hers on his arm.

"Can't you?" she repeated.

Anne came to the door with a tray on which was lemonade and cake, stopped when she saw them, and would have gone again, but Alec went toward her and relieved

Digitized by Google

her of the tray. Freda looked after him. He picked up his hat and turned to her.

"I will, Freda, until to-morrow." He spoke steadily and as though he depended upon her as much as upon himself. But before he could leave, the front door opened and both Dr. Hartwell and Harden were heard in the hall. The doctor was in high spirits and was the first to enter. His emotion over Frederica as she hid her face on his shoulder gave her a chance to regain her self-control, but when she looked up she saw Alec pass Harden, who had put out his hand, without looking at him. As the door slammed Harden's eyes blazed.

"Why was he here—to greet me?" he said to Anne.

"He came with his father," she replied. Then seeing his surprise increase, she said, "and Mr. Sloane came to see Dr. Hartwell."

"Well, well, Freda," Dr. Hartwell was saying, "I suppose you have seen every nook and cranny in the house already."

"No—not yet," said Freda.

She was looking fixedly at Eugene, who was taking the letters which Maggie just then brought into him. Her father laughed again.

"My dear," he said, "you are staring at Eugene as though you had never seen him before!"

"Am I?" said Frederica, and began folding her traveling coat as though it were a shawl. There was nothing else with which she could busy herself, and she felt the moment unendurable. She had looked at Eugene, had had one deep look from his eyes, and she had felt herself on the point of rushing to him in spite of the three people in the room, and throwing herself into his arms. He had never seemed so fine to her, so trustworthy, so

Digitized by Google

completely hers. The primeval woman in her was trusting in spite of evidence and proofs.

"Eugene!" She said it almost like a cry.

He came quickly and put his arms about her. Anne and Dr. Hartwell were a little embarrassed, but almost immediately Frederica tossed back her head to get the hair out of her eyes, and laughed. She had touched him and felt natural and sane again, and in her own world, which was his.

Dr. Hartwell was speaking to Anne. "They think they have found the man who has set the fire," he said. "It is John Scanlan."

Freda caught the words and released herself from Eugene's embrace. "John Scanlan?" she asked. "Why, why he has always been such a good man."

Harden turned to Dr. Hartwell. "He was put up to it by Lange—and Lange is in the pay of Alexander Sloane."

"Impossible!" said Dr. Hartwell.

"I am very sorry," said Harden, "but I shall have to expose Sloane to-morrow. Scanlan will have to suffer, to save the union's reputation, but the real blame will be laid on Sloane. I shall see to that!"

"You mustn't! You mustn't!" said Freda wildly. "You must, you *must* keep friendly with Mr. Sloane!"

"What do you mean, Freda?" asked Eugene.

She did not know what to say, and as she looked at him she guessed that he was thinking of Alec Sloane's behavior.

Her father answered for her. "Freda is thinking of how long our families have been friends," he said.

Freda's eyes were still on Eugene's in a fascinated gaze. "I am not thinking of Alec Sloane," she said, which of

Digitized by Google

course roused Harden's memory to vividness. "I am thinking of your—work, your influence with the men."

She saw the passing look of weariness which she knew in his face as a sign of his distrust, as though he were saying: "What a fool I am to believe in anything!" And she knew she had blundered.

"My work!" His voice had the unanswerable sarcasm in it. "I think you hardly understand my work as yet. Not"—he kept her silent by an uplifted hand—"not that I expect you to, nor have I ever hoped you would. *No* woman cares for a man's work." He gave her no chance to answer, but spoke to her father. "On your account I am very sorry, but if American business conditions allow of intrigue—the intrigues must be exposed."

Mrs. Schneider threw open the dining-room doors and displayed the luncheon table with its white cloth, silver, and centerpiece of flowers.

"You are willkommen, Herr Harden—welcome," and she seized his two hands in hers with German enthusiasm.

"We must forget work now," said Dr. Hartwell, and offered his arm to Anne; but his gayety was forced, and he did not look back at Frederica and Eugene, who followed, however, at once.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV

HIS WORK AND HER HONOR

FOR hours Frederica had wandered about her new house lost in thought. It was lonely, but for a time she did not feel it, because the scene with Alec was so vivid. There were two problems before her—one concerned Eugene's work and reputation and the other concerned her position. Eugene Harden had been working for months to create the right spirit among the employees in the lumber yard, and it was through this great interest of his that she had learned to know him. She could not think of him apart from his work any more than she could think of her father as an atheist opposed to church or creed. Frederica realized her own limitations; she knew that she had only an emotional grasp of the questions with which Eugene was concerned; but she knew that his interest was a vital one, and could not bear to think that anything should come between him and his accomplishment. Had he been an artist and some one had threatened to destroy a piece of unfinished work, she would have met the enemy with the same intent as she was planning to meet Sloane.

She could see the conflict between Sloane, representing corporate power, on one side, and Harden, representing the class-conscious worker, on the other, as a great game; and she must choose sides. All her love of justice, all

Digitized by Google

her sentiment, came into her opposition of Alexander Sloane.

Frederica had never considered the question, Is a lie justifiable? She was not considering it now. She felt that one person's lie for the sake of another might be excusable. She did not go into generalities far enough to consider whether there were always complications afterwards, such as she was facing. Without knowing it, Frederica was meeting this problem of hers without creed or ethical prejudice. She was meeting it as any primeval woman, with instinct and passion as her motive forces.

If she was not married according to all international laws of all civilized societies, it was her own fault, not Harden's, and she felt that she must not let him pay the penalty—the heavy penalty of failure. She knew that had he to make a definite choice between his happiness, his love of her and his work, in behalf of the men, that he would choose the latter. But Sloane was not going to let him make the choice; he was going to force Harden into complete obscurity for having loved her.

It is probable that had Frederica been brought up in a more worldly and conventional home, this question of herself would have been a different one for her. She would have had some experience of the world's attitude toward marriage and love. She would, at least, have heard some discussion which would have enlightened her. Cinderella, compelled by older sisters to stay at home, had no doubt heard much of what went on in the world of gayety, so that when she did make her dramatic entrance at the ball, she was quite as sophisticated as any of the other guests, and had wit enough besides to make the slipper test before accepting the prince's attentions. But Frederica was far simpler than that, and now her

Digitized by Google

crisis had found her unprepared, as far as worldly wisdom might have made her equal to the conditions she was facing.

Eugene Harden had told her that it was only a legal technicality which bound him to some one else, and not for one moment had she ever thought of him as loving anyone else. She never drew a picture to herself of any other woman. It was as though he had told her that something in his family history had bound him not to marry. She did not know much about men, but her feeling was that he, too, had stepped into a new world at the same moment she had. They belonged to each other because they were both carried into their moments of intense feeling by the same mood.

All the afternoon Freda had been trying to make herself face her problem, but she could not, not even when she recalled Alec's question, "Your honor, Freda?" Her honor? Now at this hour of the evening she had come up to her room and had just read Eugene's telegram, saying he would not be home until twelve. She would try and think it all out before he came and have some decision made.

This room of hers was not a place for thought, but she did not know that. It was very unlike the one she had slept in for years. There was no puritan blue and white to cool fancy. Instead, the colors were mellow and glowed in the firelight. She undressed and slipped on a dressing gown of a color that caught the light. Then she sat down on the rug in front of the grate, and as the flames rose and fell, she looked like the bit of wavering fire in an opal.

She felt the warmth of the fire on her bare throat, the softness of the silk gown where it touched her, the quiet of the house, the shadows on the wall. She stretched out

Digitized by Google

at full length on the rug and pillowed her head on her bent arm. Now she would think!

From the beginning she ranged remembered events methodically, in order to review them, to find that one which might have dishonor in it, or be the forerunner of disaster. But she found herself lingering over those hours which had brought them most closely together. She realized now that he had taken possession of her that first evening, when some impulse had led him to put his hand over hers on the table.

Slowly she went over every episode which she could remember that might shed light upon her own personal problem. It was all quite plain now. He had accepted her at her own word that she had courage. He was living according to the law of the spirit, just as she had told him he should. And now? did she have the courage? She began to feel a little resentment that he had never put these ideas into words for her. Why had he not discussed it with her and strengthened her principles? She felt so in the dark, so confused, that she knew she was not able to judge.

If she were not his wife, how would she feel afterwards, when she got used to the idea? Before that question Frederica was quite helpless. She had no experience at all which could throw any light upon her feeling toward the conventions of the world, or the conventional world's feeling toward her. It seemed so perfectly natural to be where she was, in his house, as his wife, that she could not think of herself anywhere else.

She had nothing in her mind that could fasten itself to this problem, and so she tried to think what it would be if she were to follow Alec's advice and go home to her father. Her heart stopped beating at the thought. It

Digitized by Google

seemed as if her father's little house and everything connected with her life in it was a small empty shell from which she had escaped. She had been happy while she was there, but she could not go back into it again.

Supposing, then, that she would again go out and try to earn her living? The memory of her helplessness the day when she tried to do it, six months before, came back very vividly to her, but the desolation that she felt was not that she would be somewhere else, but that he would not be there with her. It was a terrible thought that swept over her—the thought that perhaps it was her own desire to be with him, her own selfishness, which was going to give her the courage to stand by him and to pretend to the world that she was his wife, and in some way to keep Mr. Sloane from spreading the story.

When she became conscious that it was her great desire, and not a noble, self-sacrificing spirit, which prompted her, she began for the first time to see what it would mean to live with him, knowing herself not his wife, but his mistress. All the traditions of a thousand years, which have kept the woman away from freedom, have made the legal restraint the spiritual law for the sex, suddenly appeared to her as a great wall which might fall upon her. When she learned this in a moment, not through any abstraction, not through anything that her father had ever taught her, or that Eugene Harden had ever said to her, but through her own consciousness of herself, and of her body, the great longing that she had to see him (for she was looking toward the door constantly, hoping for him to come in, listening for his footstep), revealed what it was that bound them to each other. It was their great need of each other. He had asked that night when she had told him of Alec's desire to marry her

Digitized by Google

if she needed Alec, and even then she had felt that she needed Eugene. But as she looked back on it, the need was a dim fantasy of the desire which kept her breathless and palpitating now. So she decided that she would not think about herself; she would think about his work. Again and again his words cut her—his words about her interfering with his work. He had not understood; he did not know that it was his work that she was fighting for.

In her conversation with Alec that morning she had been much more conscious of Eugene Harden as a man among men, a worker for a great cause, than she was now. Alec was right when he said that if she would think it over by herself she would feel differently. But he had counted on her feeling the shame of the thing when she faced the idea of her relation to Harden without taking into account his work, as she had done with him. Instead of shame she felt an immense joy. All the warring spirit within her rose up to fight. There must be something that she could do to beat Sloane, and she was going to do it now, she made up her mind (for she was very honest with herself), not altogether because of the work of the man she loved, but because of the man himself, and the necessity which she recognized of staying with him.

With the thought that she had decided, she could no longer sit quietly in front of the fire. She got up and went to the window and threw it up, noisily challenging the silence. The fresh air rushed into the room and she breathed deep of it, leaning out to look down the street; for although she had not reached any solution, had no idea of how she was to meet Alexander Sloane, she had all the sense of having beaten him even now.

The street was very quiet, and the converging lines of the road and sidewalk ran into the distance and became

Digitized by Google

only shadows. The street lamps stood wakeful as sentinels along a past line of march. But there was no one coming, and she had the feeling of being held absolutely alone, suspended in space between her past and her future.

She paced back and forth several times as though she were marching to some inner music. After all, the war-woman on the horse carrying the man to Walhalla could not feel the determination which she felt.

The clock interrupted its own ticking quickstep to strike ten. So there were two hours yet before he was likely to be home. She had two hours more to think out a plan. Now and again horses' heels clicked on the asphalt under her window. But everything in the house was quiet. The cook slept at home, and had left early after supper, marveling that a young wife could so soon be left to a lonely meal, shaking her head ponderously over the significance of the thing. Maggie had tried to be companionable, and had been most busy, doing unnecessary things in unexpected places.

While Frederica was walking toward her own door, still intent upon her own thoughts, she heard the back door slam. She went out of her room quickly and down the hall to the head of the back stairs and called down to Maggie. There was no response. Again she called, and then went down herself, because if Maggie had gone out and left the door unlocked, it was unwise to leave it so. When she got into the kitchen, which seemed most strange to her, for she had hardly noticed the different rooms in her house, so full had her afternoon been of emotions, she saw a white heap in front of the door that opened on the back yard.

"Maggie!" she cried, for she felt that the indistinct form huddled there must be Maggie.

Digitized by Google

"Yes, Miss Freda," said Maggie faintly.

"What is the matter?" asked Freda.

"Some one came," said Maggie, and she rose unsteadily and went groping about to find the matches. "I guess it was a burglar," she said, "or a robber."

"Why, it's too early," said Freda.

By this time Maggie had lit the gas and Frederica saw that her face was white.

"Why did it frighten you so?"

"I don't know," said Maggie. "They knocked twice. I thought it was the milkman and I got out of bed and came down."

Then Frederica noticed that she was in her nightdress, which hung in funny folds from her slender shoulders. "You poor child!" she said, and in some way, being in her own house, and having gone through the thoughts of the evening, made her suddenly feel old, and as though she understood all the tremors and terrors that might be in the world.

Maggie burst into tears. "It must have been a robber," she said; but she knew perfectly well that it was Lange. She had recognized him through the crack in the door, which she had opened very softly on account of her scant attire and her fear of outsiders. The moment she had caught sight of him she had slammed the door again and locked it, and that was what Frederica had heard.

Maggie crept up to bed and Frederica petted her, telling her not to be a little coward, it must have been some mistake. Then she went back into her own room and began again to walk and plan. After a little while she began to feel very tired, for she had kept her mind so steadily upon these things that confronted her, that it was beginning

Digitized by Google

to go round and round without clearness. She lay down in front of the fire, and very soon, in spite of her attempt to keep awake, she had dropped off to sleep, and had short, queer little dreams, very far removed from those that she had been having.

Eugene entered into one of these dreams as though by magic. He had made no sound as he came in, but there he was looking down at her. She did not speak, for it might have broken the spell, but she felt his breath as he kneeled beside her. His lips were coming nearer and nearer. She smelled the scent of the tobacco which he used. It had come to be incense on her altar; her nostrils widened and she caught her breath.

"You will catch cold lying on the floor, Frederica."

It was a prosaic thing for a man in a dream to say, and she had no answer except to cling tightly to him as he lifted and carried her across the room. He must have been home some time for he, too, was in a dressing gown. She laughed and put her sleep-warm cheeks against his throat where it showed above the loose collar.

"I waited up for you," she said.

"Yes, up in the clouds," he answered, as he put her down on her bed, and drew off her slippers. She kissed the back of his head, because it happened to be nearest her lips.

In the dark, long after he was asleep, she lay there trying to puzzle out the relations between a man's work and a woman's honor.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

A MORNING OF GOSSIP

THE next morning, while Frederica was waiting with anxiety for Alec Sloane, and wondering what she should do if her father or Anne should come over to see her while he was there, Mrs. Schneider came in with a German bouquet wrapped in many papers.

"All morning I haf to myself said: 'Arme kleine Frau Harden alone in a big house und her new Mann busy mit strikes.' Schön, nicht?" She handed the flowers to Frederica, who thanked her and asked her to sit down. Then, in the effort to appear calm, she took her sewing out of her basket and sat down near the window.

Mrs. Schneider seated herself comfortably and looked about. "You was lucky to get Mr. Harden for your man! Not many girls over by us can have such luck! I haf told Otto when your man came over by us your papa should be careful. Mein sister in der old country—ach— But Mr. Harden was a gut—all-over gut man—und mit money. Last year in der spring, Lisa, meine sister, died. He gave her money—ach, ja—money, but not a good name. Der boy—ja, she had a little boy—he is here in dis country. He knows—he is big now—he hates rich people und—ach, ja—he is bitter."

Frederica did not ask the particulars of Mrs. Schnei-

Digitized by Google

der's sister's life, although she wanted to. To-day she was conscious of but one great fact in human life—the relation of man and woman. But she could not bring the questions she would have asked to her lips. Instead, she put a perfectly commonplace one.

"Can you make buttonholes?"

"Gewiss—sure—what do you sew?"

"Mrs. Flanagan, Maggie's mother, is sick, and I am making some clothes for the twins." Frederica held out a pair of diminutive trousers which looked quite misshapen. "I began these before I was—before I went away," she said, "and they are all done but the buttonholes. I hate to make buttonholes."

Mrs. Schneider tried not to laugh. "What for little pants!" she exclaimed, taking them and holding them between her and the light. "What for little pants!"

"You take my thimble," said Frederica. "I can get along very well without. But tell me what is the matter with this sleeve." She took a girl's dress out of the basket.

"Gott im Himmel!" cried Mrs. Schneider, laughing. "It is wrist in armhole, und shoulder below! What makes you to sew, Miss Freda?"

"Don't you laugh, Mrs. Schneider," said Frederica, who was beginning to relax under the kindly criticism of her old friend. "I am making these things because I want Mrs. Flanagan and the rest of you to know how much I think of you—and to know that because I have come over here to live—and the house is bigger—I'm not going to change. And you mustn't change, either, but be just the same."

Mrs. Schneider leaned forward and patted Frederica's knee. "You don't change, gewiss nicht, but you gif me

Digitized by Google

to sew dose little pants und der wrong side up sleeve—ach, ja," she laughed. "After little while you will haf many little pants und dresses to sew." Mrs. Schneider nodded her head several times with matronly significance.

Quick as a flash Frederica covered her face with her hand and shrank back. Mrs. Schneider sat up very straight in amazement.

"Was ist?" she asked. "You don't like to haf babies?" There was some censure in her voice.

"You—you surprised me," said Frederica, trying to smile.

"So—?" Mrs. Schneider's interrogation was long drawn out, and expected an answer, which Frederica gave reluctantly.

"Children are a great responsibility," she said. What she was thinking showed in her eyes, but Mrs. Schneider did not see that. Frederica was afraid of the thought of a child, because of her decision. A child born without the law was indeed a great responsibility. And her decision might mean that! Until Mrs. Schneider had spoken she had not faced that part of her problem.

"But der liebe Gott will gif many children to so gut a man like yours," said Mrs. Schneider, and patted Frederica in a motherly way, moved by the emotion in the girl's face, even though she did not understand it. "It is hard for a little to speak of it, but it is gut."

Frederica changed the subject by asking after the boys, and Mrs. Schneider was content to talk of them. They sat there sewing when Anne came in, much perturbed in face and manner.

"Can I see you alone?" Anne said.

"Ja, gewiss," said Mrs. Schneider. "I go mit dese."

Digitized by Google

"Don't go," said Frederica, "but wait upstairs in my room. I shall need you to help me later." She indicated the troublous sleeves of the little Flanagan costume. Someway she wanted Mrs. Schneider in the house, although she could not have told just why.

The German woman took all the sewing and went upstairs. Anne had not yet sat down, but was impatient to talk. The moment the door closed on Mrs. Schneider she put her question:

"Freda, can your father come here to live?"

Frederica looked at her in astonishment. "What has happened?"

"My family are making an awful row about my staying there with your father—without—without a chaperon." The vials of Anne's protests burst. "Me, an old maid, so commonplace that your father never looks at me—needing a chaperon!"

In exasperation she pulled off her gloves and rolled them into a ball which she clinched in her hand. "They never wanted me to 'work in the slums'—that's what they called it—and now they think they have this excuse to prevent me."

Frederica was glad that some one else was restless and face to face with the world's convention. "Why don't you tell them that—that it's all right, and for them not to bother you?"

"Tell them?" asked Anne.

"Why, it's nonsense, Anne," replied Frederica. "You are so *practical*."

"For heaven's sake, Freda," said Anne, "don't call me 'practical'!"

Frederica was surprised. "Why not?" she asked.

"I hate to be put in a category and have the label

Digitized by Google

thrown at me every time anyone speaks to me. I am something else besides 'practical,' I hope."

"I didn't mean anything unpleasant."

"Well, can he come, Freda? He can't stay alone in that house."

Frederica did not reply for a moment. If she decided to stay with Eugene, could she endure living under her father's eye? It would be lying to him repeatedly, and at every moment of their days together. She rose and went over toward the fire. Anne did not know what to make of this hesitation. Before the wedding she had lived in fear of Frederica expressing a desire for Dr. Hartwell to come into the new home, and she had been on the edge of apprehension. It had never dawned on her that Freda might not want her father. She had put the question as a matter of form, as an introduction to her own complaint. She looked in astonishment at Frederica's back and waited.

Frederica spoke with face averted. "I would rather my father did not come until things are a little more—settled."

"Oh," said Anne, "you mean the strike?"

Frederica was relieved at the interpretation. "Yes—when Eugene has gotten the men to go back to work Mr. Sloane will feel more kindly, and then it will not be embarrassing."

Anne's suspicion was roused by the quick way in which Frederica spoke.

"Freda," she said, "I have never in my life known anyone to be so changed by—marriage. Are you—disappointed?"

Frederica threw back her head. "What a question!"

Anne went to her with directness. "What is the real

Digitized by Google

reason you don't want your father to live with you?" she asked, and compelled Frederica's gaze.

Frederica was trying to control herself. She felt on the verge of confession. But she knew that any mistake now might destroy her service to Eugene. She said nothing and went on with her sewing.

Anne spoke what had lain in her thought for months. "I wish that man had never come to this country. He has had a terrible influence on both of you. He can wind you around his finger and come between you and your father—and his theories about everything have upset your father. I should not be surprised if Dr. Hartwell gave up his Mission and all his good work among the poor and became a radical—like your husband! It was all so peaceful before he came—and now!"

Frederica was glad of Anne's excitement, although she did not know where it would lead them.

"If he would give up the Mission and help Eugene fight for the rights of the men over there, instead of just praying with their wives——"

"Why, he'd be called a labor agitator, a socialist!" interrupted Anne. "I shall do everything I can to keep him from that. I shall not let him come over here to live. I don't care what my family say. Your father is a martyr, and no one appreciates him. I am the best friend he has," she said, "and I shall stand by him."

Frederica felt contemptible, but she could not deny Anne's statement without proving the denial by insisting that her father come to live with her. And she was afraid to have him. She wished that Anne would go. She wanted to be alone. Anne read her silence, and began pulling on her gloves, but suddenly covered her face with her two hands and burst into tears. Freda sprang to her feet,

Digitized by Google

but did not for a moment go to Anne nor express any sympathy. She knew that this outburst was from Anne's heart, and she could not quite endure the thought of anyone's romantic attitude toward her father.

"I can't stay—it's all nonsense to pretend I can. I have got to give it all up and go home." Anne spoke brokenly, but was regaining her self-control.

Frederica came over to her and put her hand on Anne's shoulder. "I really can't see why you have to do what anyone else wants in this. You have your work, and you have lived at our house for four years. If you are happy there, you *ought* to stay."

"Because, Freda, people will talk." Anne spoke as though beginning to lose patience with Frederica's attitude of complacency.

"Well"—Freda paused—"what hurt will that do? No one will believe anything wrong—I—I can't bear to talk about it—and my own father—it seems vulgar!"

"What hurt? I will tell you. Freda, when I was your age, I was engaged to be married, and I was happy, and there was gossip about the man. My family never let me see him again—and afterwards, when it was too late, I found out it was only gossip. That is what hurt it does."

Frederica drew herself up. "You ought not to have let your family interfere. You ought to have seen him—have gone to him."

"You don't understand," said Anne. "You have had very little experience with men, Freda." She turned to go. "I hope you never will understand."

"Anne." Frederica rose above her own personal feelings, thought only of what was written in the face before her. "I don't understand, because I don't know

Digitized by Google

if you'd not be happier away from—from our house since my father—doesn't—doesn't seem to feel the way you do."

"Oh, no," said Anne quickly, "I don't see how I can go away; but I can't bear to be talked about. I have to remember that I have been trying to set an example to those people, to my girls' club—to——"

"I think," interrupted Frederica, "that you are a coward. People who try to set examples always are."

But before either of them had come back to some conventional remark to cover the growing distance between them, Mrs. Schneider came in with red face and wide-open eyes. "Oh, weh! oh, weh! Miss Freda," she said, "Maggie is to haf a baby!"

Frederica and Anne, forgetting their discussion, looked at each other with the same question: What was to be done? Mrs. Schneider went on with her own thoughts: "She will nicht say the name of der man. And we must find der man, ach, ja!"

Anne nodded approvingly. "Yes, he must be made to marry her."

Frederica said nothing. She had heard Eugene's key in the front door, and her heart jumped in sudden remembrance that he might be coming to tell her that he had heard the story, must go away, must leave her. She watched the door and caught the first glimpse of him as he came in. Then she took a long breath because he did not show any sign of excitement. He spoke to Anne and Mrs. Schneider, who appealed to him at once.

"Mr. Harden, can you perhaps nicht find der man—Maggie's man? She should to get married."

Harden went over to Frederica. "Has she never told you, Freda?" he asked.

Digitized by Google

"I've never asked her."

"Well, ask her now," said Eugene. "He must be made to marry her."

"No," said Frederica, speaking slowly, "I won't ask her."

"Why not?" asked Anne.

"Because no one has any right to know if Maggie doesn't want to tell."

"But ein baby!" said Mrs. Schneider.

"It is her baby!" replied Frederica. "I will take care of Maggie."

"Frederica," said Eugene, "Mrs. Schneider and Miss Forester are right. Maggie must get married—for the child's sake as well as her own."

"What right have you to say that—to me?" she said suddenly, facing him, forgetful for the instant of the two women, and then frightened at what she had said, for Anne was regarding her with surprise. But Mrs. Schneider's interpretation was accepted.

"Mr. Harden has right to say it to you, because Maggie loves you and will tell you der name. I will say to Maggie you wish her to tell you." She went toward the door.

"No, Mrs. Schneider!" cried Frederica.

"Let her go, Freda," said Eugene. "It will be easier for her than for you, and we must find out."

The authority in his voice was not to be contradicted. Anne looked pityingly at Frederica. It was exactly what she had predicted: a foreign husband was always a tyrant.

When Mrs. Schneider had gone, nodding with approval at Eugene's agreement in tactics, Anne came over to Frederica. "You needn't give another thought to your

Digitized by Google

father, Frederica," she said. "I intend to stay at his house and make him comfortable."

"Thank you," said Frederica listlessly. She was too much concerned with the discussion over Maggie to go back to that over her father. Anne went away with all sorts of emotions claiming the right to choke her—pity for Maggie, and a little for Freda—a great deal for herself—and anger distributed wherever pity left any gaps. She went straight back to the little house on Desplaines Street and got lunch for Dr. Hartwell as if nothing had happened. He had been away all the morning and spoke of how he missed Frederica whenever he came home. That was all the reward Anne got, and she pondered over its significance while she washed the lunch dishes.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

ALEC'S PROMISE

FREDERICA stood looking at the floor after Anne and Mrs. Schneider had left the room. Harden watched her a moment and then went to her. She drew back from him when he would have taken her in his arms. "Don't, please," she said.

"You must not let Maggie's troubles make you unhappy; we will soon arrange that."

She resented his way of speaking to her as a child, and answered him quickly.

"You have no right to interfere," she said. "Suppose some one wished to—to interfere with our—loving each other?"

Eugene laughed. "Could anyone?" He meant it as a sign of his certainty that nothing could come between them; but she, with the knowledge of what hung over them, took the question with fear in her eyes.

"Could anyone?" she repeated to herself.

Eugene answered her, laughter still in his voice. "No, I should fight like a wild beast if anyone wished to come between us." Again she drew back, lifting terrified eyes to his, so that he sobered instantly. "What is it, Freda?"

"I was thinking how dreadful it would be if some one

Digitized by Google

—something should come between—if you had to go away." Suddenly she held out her hands to him. "Don't go away," she said.

"You love me!" He took her, resisting, into his arms, and his voice had exultation in it. "I thought you were one of the shadow women—who are never stirred, and it is always my great surprise that you, too, feel love. When I am away from you I doubt your love, I cannot help it. I am always afraid that when I come back you will be gone, that you will be at home with your father just as I found you, without memory even of my—of my passion for you. But you love me!" He drew her head back so that he could see her eyes.

"Too much." Her voice was quivering with all that lay underneath her words.

"It is not possible for a wife to love her husband too much."

"I am afraid to love so much," she said. "I fight it all the time. I have said to myself, 'You must be spiritual, you must not tremble when he comes near you, you must not feel your lips so hungry for his.' Eugene—I have struggled not to show it. I did not know there was this torment of joy—how could I? I planned so differently. I thought we would work and love *other* people."

He seated himself on the divan and drew her down beside him. For a moment she closed her eyes, with her head against his shoulder. He lifted her hands and kissed their palms. Something in her mood, for all she had admitted her love so intensely, kept him quiet. It was as though he was restraining her from too great self-consciousness.

"Where are your rings, Freda?"

Digitized by Google

She heard the question through a tumult, and drew away from him.

"I took them off when Mrs. Schneider came. I could not bear to let her see them. She might think I had changed. Why did you give them to me?"

"Why not?" he asked.

"Why did you give me so much—this house, these beautiful things? Oh, you ought not to have given them to me!"

"Why not?" he said again.

"Because it is wicked for me to have them. And now I shall miss them. I did not know I loved beautiful things until you gave them to me."

"But you are always to have them."

"Eugene!" She rose to her feet and clasped her hands behind her, as she always did when she was determined. He recognized the pose. "I want you to take me over where I lived before we—before I left home. I want to live right among the working people and just as they do. I want to wash dishes and sew and work very hard."

"Why do you wish those things?" He was facing her in a way she dreaded, because she knew it meant questions. To keep the questions off she answered quickly, and built a reasonable structure as she went along; at least it seemed reasonable to her.

"It will be much better for me," she said. "This comfort and beauty intoxicate me. I shall get spoiled. I shall soon think only of clothes—and—rings—and I want to think only of your work. It is better for you to live among the people you are trying to help—to be of their class—isn't it?" She had spoken breathlessly.

Eugene treated her intensity almost with indifference. "You're a sentimentalist, Freda. I am not trying to be

Digitized by Google

a philanthropist or live humbly in order to do my work. I am with the under dog, but that doesn't mean I must live in his kennel. It would be as much humbug for me to live over there as it would be for Gustav Lange to come here and live."

"But I am used to that life over there."

"I know. It used to hurt me that you were living in such a place. You should always have had beauty in your surroundings. It belongs to you."

"It doesn't belong to me. I did not earn it."

"But I have given it to you."

"That is it! I must not take gifts from you." Her voice was hard and thin. She was so afraid she could not gain her way with him, and afraid, too, that something of the truth would slip out.

She hurried on. "I love you too selfishly. I work every day with you, but—it's not because of the work, it's because I want to be near you, to see you. Even Anne tells me I am changed, and you won't love me if I am changed——"

There was something insincere in the way she spoke, which was evident to herself, and it made her pause.

Harden was regarding her with suspicion. "You are hiding something from me, Frederica," he said.

She put her clenched hand over her lips. "It is quite true that I want to leave this house, I want to go back —home!"

It was true. The house had become for her the symbol of sin. She had wakened to the fact that her senses were keen to enjoy all this unaccustomed beauty and luxury, and it frightened her. She wished for privations, for the opportunity to slave for him, to struggle, in order to prove to herself that love was not luxury nor depend-

Digitized by Google

ent upon luxury. Everything about her rose up to smother her in sensuous delights. The world of outer things, the hundreds of men waiting for justice, the conspiracy of Sloane with his peers, the saving of souls by her father, all those things were afar off; and she was here in this room with a man whom she loved, who was not her husband, who had given her gifts which she was crying out to return to him. And he would not hear her, called her a sentimentalist, would not believe that she knew what she was saying. But she could not explain, and therein lay the beginning of the misunderstanding.

A man of fine feeling is particularly sensitive to the possibility of a woman being frightened by his emotion, or displeased by her new surroundings. To Harden this outbreak of Frederica was perhaps not a surprise, but it hurt him none the less.

"Frederica," he said, "you are free to choose your home."

Free! The word stunned her. Could it be possible that he was angry enough to fling it at her when, for the first time, they were in argument? Free! That was the reason of all her dismay and unhappiness. Had she only felt herself bound by ten thousand laws! As she looked at him she fancied she saw something in his face which she had not seen before, anger tinged with contempt, as though he despised her for having been so eager to be deceived by him. He was waiting for her to say something to him, but she had no words, only a great desire to throw herself into his arms and explain what lay hidden in all that she had been saying. She rebelled inwardly against that desire, for did it not prove how completely she had yielded to a passion which she before this did not know had any existence? She felt her body

Digitized by Google

burn with new shame, and she turned so that he might not see her eyes full of hot tears.

"Freda," said Eugene, "don't you think you could have waited a day or two before telling me of—your unhappiness? I ought not to think of anything except the strike, of what must be done—and you are making that almost impossible."

She heard only the reproof in his voice, not the pain trembling underneath it, and it added to her humiliation.

"I am thinking of your work," she said. "It is because I think we should live with the people you are helping."

Mrs. Schneider came in just then. "Maggie is nicht here!"

"She was afraid!" said Freda.

"Without hat oder money, she is gone."

"Where do you think she would go?" Eugene asked Frederica.

"I don't know."

"I will go and find das Mädchen, Maggie," and Mrs. Schneider went back to the kitchen to get her hat and coat, but appeared immediately on the threshold again with Mrs. Scanlan, who had been let in the back door by the cook. "Mrs. Scanlan is here to see you," she said, and was gone to find Maggie.

Mrs. Scanlan came over to Harden and put a crumpled letter into his hand.

"This shows he didn't do it," she said. "He never got it. It came the next day, after the fire." She was trembling and ashen gray. She stood there with her hands resting on the desk while he read it.

"Start the fire in the northeast corner of the yard at one o'clock. The rubbish will make the best beginning.

Digitized by Google

Let the capitalist suffer in his pocketbook a little to make up for what you've suffered from him."

Harden recognized at once that the letter had very little value as evidence. It was typewritten; the envelope was typewritten; and there was no possible way of telling who had written it, unless Scanlan could be made to confess. He knew, of course, that Scanlan had set the fire.

Mrs. Scanlan began to cry. "He didn't do it," she said. "I know he didn't do it. He's got reason to feel hard against Sloane, but he wouldn't do a thing like this."

"What reason, Mrs. Scanlan?" asked Harden.

"Sloane had him blacklisted when the boy was sick one time. Scanlan couldn't get any work, and that's the reason the boy has fits and never got over his sickness. Oh, he hates Sloane, but he wouldn't make more trouble for ourselves by getting the law against us."

"But he was out very late that night, wasn't he?" asked Harden.

Frederica was holding Mrs. Scanlan's head on her shoulder and patting her. The woman was terror-stricken. She was unable to deny that her husband was out late, and she knew how for all these years he had nursed his great resentment against the man whose blacklisting had ruined their boy's chance in the world. As much as she loved her husband, she began to believe in his guilt. There was too much reason for it. She would not have been strong enough to go over into the yards and light the fire to destroy Sloane's property; but she knew that Scanlan was strong enough, because he was a silent man, and had his will wherever it was possible.

"Freda," said Eugene, "you had better go home with Mrs. Scanlan—or keep her here," and he went toward the door.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Scanlan ran forward trembling from where she stood, and seized Harden's hand. "He had such good reason," she said, "and the boy has been so bad of late. If he'd died when he was a baby, Scanlan wouldn't have got so bitter. Don't tell on him! Put it on some other man who ain't so good! He's always been good!"

Harden looked at her with pity in his face; but he made no pretense of easing her anxiety. "It's necessary to sacrifice one man," he said, "to save the union."

Frederica had seen the hard look come into Eugene's face and her blood turned cold at the idea of his being the one to bring John Scanlan to justice.

"Eugene," she said, "he isn't to blame. Don't be hard on him."

Harden did not even reply by a glance as he left.

The two women sat silent where they were. Mrs. Scanlan was facing the idea of her husband's open disgrace, Frederica was trying to believe that Eugene would not force the full penalty upon the man. She was conscious of a certain hardness in him that she had not guessed to be there and she had been completely ignored.

Mrs. Scanlan sat fearful in the expectation of the news coming to her, when the door opened. Alec Sloane was there. At the sight of him Mrs. Scanlan covered her face and began to rock back and forth, believing that he had come to tell them bad news. But he looked at her in surprised indifference and spoke only to Frederica.

"Can I see you?" he asked.

"Mrs. Scanlan," said Frederica, "don't worry. Mr. Sloane hasn't any bad news of your husband. He has come to talk to me about something else. Will you wait in the other room, please?"

Digitized by Google

The little gray woman got up meekly and went into the dining room, where in stunned sorrow she waited for the news which she knew must come. She felt like a trapped animal, and very soon began moving about the room; the door was open between her and the other two, but she had no idea that another crisis was being reached in there.

Alec faced Frederica with the question unspoken: What was her decision to be? It was very hard for her now to put it into words. Had he come earlier, before Mrs. Schneider had talked to her of a child, before Anne had made the conventions of the world real, before Eugene had emphasized the necessity of Maggie's marrying, and then had shown herself hard, unmoved by Mrs. Scanlan's distress—Frederica would have felt strong in the determination with which late in the night she had fallen asleep: the determination to deny every statement of Mr. Sloane, to pretend, if necessary, that she had proofs contradicting his, to tell Alec what she knew of his father, and threaten him with the exposure. For what was she in this great combat but a weapon to be used by Sloane? But she could not be used unless she showed herself weak, and admitted her position.

Alec was here, and now she must put it all into words, and the words would not come. It seemed now that she had been pushed outside Eugene's world. Could she, as an outsider, defend him? Had he not ignored her, looked upon her as an antagonist, first because she had pleaded with him for the sacredness of Maggie's secret, and then later for Mrs. Scanlan's husband? She was weakening. And Alec was watching her. She looked up and caught his expectant eyes on her, and she ran her tongue over her lips to moisten them so she could speak.

Digitized by Google

She began indefinitely and as far off from the conclusion as she could.

"It is like war," she said, "and your father has believed the lies of that Hungarian. It is very simple."

Alec signified his impatience. "Your decision, Freda?"

"Your father is—dishonorable, Alec—did you know that? He has pledged himself to destroy the union—and he can't so long as Eugene stands by the men."

"If you were a man," said Alec, "I could call you—a liar."

"But you'd have to prove it!" Anger made up for courage with her now. "I am telling the truth. Eugene is going to expose your father before to-night. The men went back to work this morning, didn't they?"

"No," said Alec, fighting against the feeling that she was telling the truth. "We won't take them back until we know who set the fire."

"We do know," said Frederica, "and he has got to pay the penalty."

"Who is it?" asked Alec.

"Your father," she answered.

"Good Lord!" Alec gave a contemptuous laugh.

"He used a poor fellow—that woman's husband." Frederica pointed to the other room.

"There's no sense in our talking this way," said Alec, coming toward her. "Are you going to go home to your father?"

"No!" said Frederica, sure of herself now.

He seized her wrist. "By God, Freda, you've got to! You don't know what you're saying! If you can't think of yourself, think of your father!"

Freda winced and tried to free her wrist. He was angry, and he felt the wild beast in him. He took his

Digitized by Google

hand away and put his arm about her and leaned over —"Your honor, Freda!" he said through his teeth.

"My *honor*!" flashed from her lips as she drew back from his unexpected embrace, her face white. Then they were both conscious of Mrs. Scanlan, who had approached them and stood looking at Frederica with parted lips and horrified eyes.

Yet she was seeing these two with a distorted vision, as from a shaken world. Many years she had heard without response John Scanlan's bitter words against the "rich." Suddenly came her answer, not to him, but to those who had become without volition his natural enemies.

"I'm glad to see it," she said. "Good Lord, I'm glad! They're over there with John Scanlan, those two, and you're here getting even with them. He's a hard man, your husband, and I'm glad you're playing him."

Her voice was shrill and cut them both, but it was almost as though she were speaking a foreign language. Alec was the first to sense her meaning, but he didn't know what to say to her, nor to Frederica, who was trembling. Mrs. Scanlan did not pause except for quick breath; all her life through she had plodded unresentful until to-day, when she knew that her husband was to face the penalty of a deed which, to her mind—justified. No law had interposed when Alexander Sloane had blacklisted Scanlan, who had at last found his chance to wreak a petty vengeance through fire. And at this moment Sloane again had the upper hand and would destroy what little of Scanlan's life was left. And Harden, who had pretended to be the workingmen's friend, was the one to bring this exaction of law to fulfillment. The Austrian had become one with the rich man.

But here was Sloane's son making love to Harden's

Digitized by Google

wife. Her gray face under the iron-gray hair had grown more haggard in these moments while her husband was on his way to retribution, and she had gone over and over in her mind the excuses which some one ought to be making for him. Now she seized with cunning the weapon these two had dropped before her.

"There are those as will be glad to hear what I've heard sitting yonder, and what I've seen. John Scanlan shan't be put away without his wife doing what will even him up with the law."

She started toward the door, but Alec was too quick to allow her going. He reached it first and put his back against it. She looked at him with age-long craft showing from every line of her face.

"You can stand there," she said, "but some one will be coming in, and I can say my say as well one where as another."

And with her purpose full grown in her mind she looked about for a chair. Her eye fell on Frederica, and she looked long at her without a word. She covered the girl with her complete contempt, and Frederica could not speak. What was there to say?

Alec Sloane knew that something must be said. He must protect Freda, and he must keep this Irishwoman from speech. He had not been conscious of her presence in the room while they were talking, and there was just a chance that she had not understood all that they had said. He did not try subtlety with her, but made a direct approach.

"You must not repeat anything you have heard here," he said; "and what you've seen you don't understand."

Mrs. Scanlan made no answer for a moment. Then she shook her head almost in derision. "You can't scare

Digitized by Google

me," she said. "It mayn't make it any easier for Scanlan, but it'll show him some things he'll be glad of."

Alec took his cue from her words. "No, it will make it harder for your husband, because I'll have to prove you a liar, but—" He stopped short with the thought of what he would offer might mean. She caught the idea of barter from his tone and came toward him.

"But what?" she asked.

Then he was sure of the wisdom of what he wanted to say. "Why, if you promise to keep still, I'll get your husband off."

The craft sharpened in her face. "Can he?" she asked Frederica.

"I don't know," said Frederica slowly. She was thinking of Eugene's determination that one man must be sacrificed for the sake of the union, and she was recalling the look of will in his face as he had left.

Alec spoke sharply. "You know I can, Freda. I must. Tell her you know I can."

"But Eugene?" she answered.

"I'll beat him on this if I have to say that I set that fire myself. Tell her I can save her husband, Freda. For God's sake, get her promise!"

Mrs. Scanlan looked from one to the other with doubt in her eyes.

"I swear I'll get your husband off!" said Alec, almost shouting.

"Can he?" asked Mrs. Scanlan again of Frederica.

Frederica heard Eugene's voice in the outer room. "Yes, Mrs. Scanlan, yes!" she said quickly, and turned quivering to the window, while Alec stepped away from in front of the door and Harden entered.

He went straight to Mrs. Scanlan. "I came back to

Digitized by Google

tell you that your husband is going to wait with me at Mr. Sloane's office until noon, when they expect Mr. Sloane back. You can go home and I will come there when we decide what is to be done."

"I will go now to see your husband," said Alec, fixing the woman with a significant promise in his voice.

Harden looked at him in surprise but said nothing. Then he spoke to Frederica. "Don't you want to take Mrs. Scanlan home, Frederica?"

"No!" said Frederica, turning again to the window.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

A VISIT OF THE COMMITTEE

MRS. SCANLAN went out the way she had come in, and Eugene Harden turned to Frederica. "What did he mean? What right had he to interfere?"

She went swiftly across the room to where he was. "Let Mr. Scanlan get away if he wants to."

His anger burst its bounds then. "Is it impossible for you to realize the necessity of making Scanlan confess to Sloane? Is it impossible for you to grasp the meaning of this strike, of this conspiracy? Have you no sense of justice, or are you like other women, without it? Can it be that you are so anxious to save an Irishman's freedom at the cost of my honor, at the cost of the honor of the body of men with whom I am working? I had great faith in you. I have deceived myself, believing that you were the wife for me because you did understand. And ever since we came home yesterday you have been trying to interfere."

"Yes," said Freda, "I know."

"Why was he here?" asked Eugene.

Freda was perfectly still, bit her lips, and looked at the floor. The moment had arrived when either she must lie to him or tell him. It was a tremendous moment to her. As he stood there with the anger in his eyes be-

Digitized by Google

cause she had been interfering in his work as he thought, she realized what the anger would be should she speak to him about his past life, for if she were wrong either one way or the other, she would pay the penalty. Were he free and married to her, and she were to let him see that she had doubted it, and that she had thought him capable of lying to her, and if his principles were opposed to lying, then it was all over between them. If, on the other hand, he had lied to her and she were to let him know, were to share the knowledge of this thing, she could not then fight Sloane and save his work to him and perhaps—he would give her no chance to stand by him, but take the whole matter into his own hands.

She was absolutely confused. Silence was her only power, her only dignity. And was she able to keep silent? Never before in her life had she had anything to conceal; never before had there been any reason why she should not look at him and tell what was in her mind. But as she looked up, her lips set stubbornly, determined to keep quiet and say nothing, she caught a look in his eyes of whose significance she could not help but be aware, and yet which up to this moment she had never imagined.

"Why was he here?" he said.

And she knew that he was jealous of Alec Sloane. She could not gather her thoughts quickly enough to know whether or not she had given him any reason to be jealous by the words she had used, or whether Alec's manner had done so. But one thought came to her which seemed to offer help and she clung to it, not knowing if she were right or wrong.

"You always said, Eugene, that no man nor no woman has any right to question the behavior of another. You laughed and called me Elsa once. It was childish then.

Digitized by Google

You expected me to trust you and you were contemptuous on the instant that I didn't. And now you don't trust me. You are asking me questions."

Eugene turned on his heel. He was not in the mood to have his own principles brought to his mind. Whether the things she had said cut him or struck him dully, she could not tell. But she breathed deep with a sense of having kept her own self-respect in keeping her privilege of silence. She would not lose that.

He faced her in a moment. "You can at least tell me," he said, "what Alec meant by what he said to Mrs. Scanlan."

"No," she said, "I cannot."

Eugene went to his writing table and began to gather up the manuscripts, hardly knowing what he was doing. "I must work," he said. "I must write what I intend to say to-night at the meeting. I hope there will be no interruptions; that I will not be interfered with in this as well as in the other things which I have been trying to do."

Frederica put her clinched hand over her lips and looked at him a moment. "I don't think," she said, "that you will be interrupted." She turned and went out of the room.

Harden sat for some time staring at the papers. Then he began to rearrange them and stared again at the opposite wall, unable apparently to go to work.

Suddenly the door was flung open and Mrs. Schneider was standing there with flaming cheeks. "Where is she?" she said. "Where is the woman that you have done bad by?"

Eugene went to her and closed the door behind her. "What do you mean, Mrs. Schneider?"

Digitized by Google

"I mean I haf heard it all. I haf heard how you haf done wrong to our poor Miss Freda—that you are married once already, und that you haf come in dis country to make all der troubles between der poor workingman und der boss. Where is she? I at once will go to her und take her by her poor father."

Mrs. Schneider had come close to him in her anger and was staring up at him with demand in her eyes.

"What story is it you have heard, Mrs. Schneider?" Harden was nervous, but he put his hands on the woman's shoulders as though to control her anger.

She stepped back from him quickly and went to the door. "Here they are," she said. "You will hear what the story is." And she opened the front door herself and let in three men—her husband, Steiner, and one other of the strike committee. Then she ran upstairs to find Freda.

Harden waited for the men to come in, and asked them to be seated; but they all stood and kept together near the door. Steiner was the spokesman.

"Mr. Harden," he said, "we have come to tell you that we don't intend to go back to work to-day. The union's got the right to hold out, and it's just as well that you know that we don't care any more to have you come in to our meetings."

Harden looked at them, drew himself up rather slowly, pressed his lips together a moment, and then said: "Well——"

His attitude demanded an explanation from them, but he did not weaken the effect of it by asking for one. He looked slowly from Schneider to Steiner, and back. Mr. Schneider was unable to meet Harden's gaze; but Steiner, who was more calloused, and who had been jealous of Harden from the beginning, and was besides a strong

Digitized by Google

partisan of Lange's, was glad to have a chance to humiliate the other man by putting the story into words before him.

"We don't care," he said, "to have men like you running our union business. We've just seen the papers that prove you're something else than what you've been letting on to be. We have got to look out for the honor of the union."

Harden folded his arms across his breast and fastened his whole gaze on Steiner. "You accepted the story of some one as to my honor?" he asked.

Steiner was ill at ease. "We have the proofs. It isn't just hearsay. You can't go back on what we've seen."

"No," said Harden, "we can't go back on that."

Then he turned to Schneider. "You believed a story without waiting to hear my side of it?" he said.

Schneider rubbed his hands together and looked at Steiner for courage. "I could come to you and get an answer, but the others will not wait."

"Yes," said Harden, and turned his back on them, went to his writing table and sat down at it. They stood looking at him, but he did not look up again, and in great embarrassment they left the room.

Mrs. Schneider, who had been waiting outside, came into the edge of the room. "She is already gone. If she is by her father she knows already. She had it in her eyes this morning." And Mrs. Schneider went back to Desplaines Street to find Freda.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

TWO DECISIONS

AFTER Anne had finished the noon dishes she went into the study where Dr. Hartwell was reading, and asked if she could interrupt him. He leaned back in his desk chair and smiled contentedly at her.

"You never interrupt me," he said. "How we do miss Freda!"

"Yes," said Anne, "that is just what I want to speak to you about."

It seemed very hard for her to begin. She stood and looked out of the window.

"It's about the way you miss Frederica," she said. "I have been trying for a week to tell you that we shall have to break up here, I think."

Dr. Hartwell brought the legs of his chair down upon the floor and took off his glasses. "Why, what is the matter?" he asked. "I thought we had settled that."

"I can't stay here," she said, "because my family—" She hesitated and hoped Dr. Hartwell would understand.

But he still looked at her in surprise, apparently nowhere near a guess as to what she meant. "What about your family?" he asked.

"My father has never been in favor of my living over

Digitized by Google

here, and now he has put his foot down and insists that I cannot stay here alone—with you."

At this Dr. Hartwell rose to his feet. His face flushed. "Your father doesn't want you to stay here alone with me?"

It was most embarrassing for Anne. "Yes, that's it," she said. "He doesn't realize that I am old and unattractive and needn't think of conventionalities."

The doctor did not see the opening to give her the comfort which would have been hers had he contradicted her. He was hurt at the idea of old Mr. Forester considering him as a dangerous man for his daughter to be with. For so long a time had Dr. Hartwell lived on without considering himself as anything except a minister of the gospel and Frederica's father, that these words of Anne's startled him. He did not know what to say.

Anne broke the silence. "I think I shall go home tomorrow. I told Freda to-day that I would stay on here with you in spite of gossip, but I have been thinking it over, and I believe it is best to go."

"I don't know what I shall do," said Dr. Hartwell in a helpless sort of way. "I don't know how I shall get along."

"I think you must go to Freda," said Anne. "I am sure she would want you to."

"But my work?" said the doctor. "I can't live there on the North Side and do my work down here."

Anne thought a moment. "Of course," she said, "you might get Mrs. Schneider to look after the house."

"But it will be so lonely," said Dr. Hartwell. "It's very lonely now."

"Yes," said Anne, "but I am afraid that can't be helped."

Digitized by Google

A great anger was rising in her that she should be standing there saying noncommittal, commonplace things to him instead of crying out as she wanted to that she cared for him, and that she would stay on if there were any chance of his caring for her. He was only fifteen years older than she—a few years ago that would have seemed a great chasm between them, and now it was only a gap across which she willingly would have reached her hand, only that the doctor kept his clasped behind him and thought of himself as an old man quite apart from romance. She wondered a little to herself if he would not miss her with some real feeling apart from the way in which he missed Frederica. But there was not a syllable that she could say to bring this thing home to his mind.

"You think you must go to-morrow?" he said. "Why, I don't see how you can go to-morrow. I don't see how I can make any arrangements about it so soon."

He seemed quite unconscious of the selfishness of his statements, and Anne was unconscious of them, too. Then he began to think of her first words.

"I don't know your father very well, Anne, but I would like to go to him and tell him that there is no reason why he should object to your staying here."

"Oh," said Anne in excitement, "that wouldn't do any good. Of course there's no reason. It's only about unreasonable things that people gossip. It's just that you are not married and that I am not married and that we are living in the same house. They believe that you could fall in love with some one if you were tempted. But even if you couldn't fall in love and you were single—and there was not any other woman round—why, they would talk about conventions and I couldn't stay. I knew

Digitized by Google

when Frederica got married that this would happen, but I didn't want to talk to you about it then, because you were so lonely for her."

The doctor stood with his hands behind him, looking at the floor. "You don't think it would do any good for me to speak to your father?" he said.

"What could you say?" she asked desperately.

"Why," said the doctor slowly, "why, I could tell him that it would interfere with my work—that you had become a very valuable assistant—that the kindergarten is a great success—there is a great deal I could tell him."

"It wouldn't do any good," said Anne. "I'll come back and help pack your things, if you will go over to Freda's; or if you want Mrs. Schneider to look after the house, I'll explain everything to her."

"You must let me think this over," said the doctor. "Don't go to-morrow, Anne. Don't go at least until the day after. By that time I may have some plan. To-day my mind is too full of other things. I am going to speak at Neff's Hall. I promised Eugene that I would be there early."

"You're going to speak again?" said Anne slowly, with the emphasis of complete surprise. "Why, I thought that you never would speak to strikers again!"

"I did not expect to," he said. "But this time it is to get the men to go back to work. Eugene seemed to think that I could have some influence at this meeting. He is very anxious that they go back to work to-morrow morning. Then we shall see whether Alexander Sloane is acting in a double-faced way."

The doctor drew himself up with dignity. In his innermost heart he was very glad to have this opportunity to show his courage and to prove to Eugene Harden that

Digitized by Google

he was a man who could take the side of justice. The doctor's loneliness since Frederica had gone had brought it home very clearly to his mind that he was living in a world apart from other men; and he missed his association with Alexander Sloane more than he cared to admit.

This second strike in the lumber yard had at first been a matter of much concern to him, for he had hoped that the two families would come to terms and be good friends. But when Harden had made the statement that he had about Sloane's business corruption, the doctor could not disbelieve it, and his conscience called him to take sides so that there could be no misunderstanding of his position. At first he had been inclined to go to Sloane and ask him if this were true, but he thought it probable that Sloane would let him hear from him the next day. If the men went back to work in the morning it would be a sign that Harden had, after all, been misled, and Sloane would be indebted to Hartwell that he had taken the side of the employees. If, on the other hand, the men did not go back, then he would know that Sloane was responsible.

Anne had not been at all concerned with what lay behind in the doctor's conscience. She was only afraid for him.

"Every time you speak outside the pulpit," she said, "you endanger your influence in the church. You can't afford to take sides in these questions. A minister of the gospel ought never to take sides in worldly things."

"I am not sure of that," said the doctor. "It seems to me that my duty often calls me into the thick of the fight."

"Yes," she said, "to pray beside the wounded men, but not to urge them to go into battle."

Digitized by Google

"I am not urging them to that," said the doctor. "I am urging them back to work."

He glanced at his watch and she felt that the one occasion for an understanding between them had slipped by her. There was to be no romance in her life. She had come into the room hoping that her embarrassment, if nothing else, would enlighten him; but he had changed the subject almost immediately, and had only postponed her going twenty-four hours on the ground that it would upset his plans. Yet she could not bear to bring the interview to an end, and he, too, was held by something in her face as she stood there looking at him.

"You don't want to go, do you, Anne?" he said.

That single approach of his to her state of mind unnerved her.

"Oh, no," she said, and sat down in a big easy-chair and covered her face with her hands. "This is home. I have been so happy here; and there is nothing congenial where I have got to stay now."

The doctor came over and patted her shoulder. "I will see that you do not go, Anne," he said. "I will talk to your father. He will have to be sensible about this thing."

Anne was humiliated now. He had been able to pat her on the shoulder as though she were a child in trouble, and that was the last straw of his practical understanding of the thing.

She sat there with her hands over her face, wondering how she could get out of the room, when she heard some one come up the front steps; and as the doctor went to the front door, she ran into her bedroom, threw herself on the narrow bed, and wept.

The doctor opened the door to Alexander Sloane, whose face was far from placid, and whose breath came fast.

Digitized by Google

"What is this," he said, "that I have heard, that you are to speak to-night to the men on strike? Is it true?"

The doctor led him into the study before he answered. Then he turned with some dignity, not at all knowing why Sloane should be excited.

"You have heard that I am going to speak to-night? Probably you have not heard that I am going to urge the men to go back to work to-morrow morning."

Sloane held his hat tight in his two hands. "Yes, I heard that, too," he said. "But I don't know what affair it is of yours whether the men work or don't work, or how these strikes come out. The last time you spoke at the meeting when they decided to hold out against me."

The doctor interrupted him. "But I spoke for arbitration, Sloane—for arbitration—you had promised that."

"This time," said Sloane, ignoring him, "you are speaking against the strike. You want the men to go to work. The next time there is trouble you will be on the other side of the fence."

By this time the doctor's dignity was very real. There was something in the manner of the man before him which, although incomprehensible, was almost insulting. Perhaps it may have been that all these months of listening to Eugene Harden's discourses upon wage slavery and lack of independence had had their effects upon the doctor. At any rate he resented Sloane's tone.

"I shall always be on that side of the fence where I believe justice is," he said. "This time I think you are in the right; and I am going to say so to-night."

Sloane stepped toward him. "You are not going to do anything of the sort. You are not going to that meeting to-night. When I put the money up for a mission over here; built the building, put in the heating apparatus,

Digitized by Google

hired the janitor, got you an organ, even put in stained-glass windows, and settled on your salary—I didn't do it because I wanted any help from you in my business affairs. I did it partly because I believed these people must have religion, and I did it partly because I saw that you would not be happy until you had come down here and got into this work. But I tell you I would never do it again. You have made me trouble from the beginning."

Dr. Hartwell looked at Sloane in amazement. The man's face was hard and grim and taut in every muscle, as though he were restraining himself from saying much more.

The doctor had a slight perception that after all it was not so much Sloane's interest in whether or not he was to speak at the meeting, as it was some other thought that was responsible for his excitement. He felt that this was the time for a soft answer, and he laid his hand on Sloane's shoulder.

"Alec Sloane," he said, "whatever you thought your reasons were for building the chapel and paying my salary, you have done God's work."

Sloane's eyes dropped. "Yes," he said, "and *that* is the work I want you to keep on doing. You will have to leave these questions of strikes and wages and hours to more experienced men, Hartwell. You can't be expected to know business, and you only make things confused. I hope that you will not speak at the meeting to-night."

The doctor had given a soft answer, but his indignation was none the less. "I certainly shall speak to-night," he said. "There was nothing in our agreement as to when and where I should speak, or what the subject should be.

Digitized by Google

I thought when I agreed to speak to-night that I would be doing you a service."

"That may be, that may be," interrupted Sloane, as though he didn't care to pursue the subject along that path.

"But," said the doctor, "whether or not I am doing you a service, I shall speak."

"Very well," said Sloane, "there may have been nothing in our agreement, but the agreement is at an end. There are plenty of young men who would like to come into that mission who are willing to devote themselves to the souls of their people, and not to meddle in politics and business."

Dr. Hartwell was perfectly calm. He knew without a moment's thought that he was being robbed of his livelihood, that he was being thrown penniless into the world, that he was a man whose whole training, whose experiences in the last ten years had unfitted him to return to the routine ministerial life. Moreover, he had been very liberal in the doctrines that he had preached, and it would be very hard for him to get into any of the strictly orthodox churches. Yet his acceptance of Sloane's statement was far quieter than any other acceptance of anything had ever been.

"I am very sorry," he said, "that you have proved to me as you stood here that the suspicion abroad in the city that you are responsible for the strike and are trying to destroy the union, is true. And I am sorry, too, that I gave you the opportunity to discharge me, instead of resigning, as I should have done months ago."

The doctor's manner plainly showed Sloane to the door. Any dignity which he might ever have lacked in his attitude toward this man of money, on whom he was depend-

Digitized by Google

ent, was his now. He was one of the men to whom humiliation means clearness of vision, who accepts a penalty without self-excuse.

Alexander Sloane kept his assumption of dignity and got into his carriage; but he was not unmoved by the doctor's statement. It was the first time that it had come to his ears that he was being suspected. Inwardly he cursed the "gentlemen's" agreement under which he was forced to keep up his fighting attitude.

The doctor went back into his study and stood for a long time with folded arms, thinking deeply. In spite of the fact that now he had no home, no church, he felt greatly relieved, as though he were about to begin life afresh.

Anne came into the room while he was still in his exalted, uplifted mood, and told him that she had decided to go home that afternoon. "I can't stay here after I have decided to go," she said. "I should be hysterical and foolish, for I do love it."

"I will go with you, Anne," he said. "I think I need a little exercise."

They went out together.

When Mrs. Schneider came in an hour later to break the news to Dr. Hartwell, the house was empty, and she thought that perhaps he had already heard and had gone after his daughter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX

A CHANCE FOR STRATEGY

WHEN Frederica went to her room she dressed quickly and left within five minutes for Mr. Sloane's office. She had reached the point where she felt she must do something; that she could not stay at home and feel that the story might be spread in spite of her. All the way down on the street car she went over in her mind what she would say to Mr. Sloane. She did not intend, whatever else she did, to show the white feather. This was war, and if there were any chance for strategy, she would use strategy. She wondered if it would be possible to promise him that he would not be exposed if he would let the men come back to work, would discharge Lange, and would not ruin Eugene's influence and position. She meant to make him see that she believed she was married, for the more she thought it over the more she was convinced that her instincts could not be wrong; that this man could not lie to her. But all these intentions and thoughts were rather vague and rested in her own mind upon what Alexander Sloane would say to her. She meant when she went into the office to ask him at once to let her see the papers. That far she knew definitely what she would do.

Going up in the elevator, she felt half smothered, but she had a sense of power and of will and of fighting in

Digitized by Google

her that she was not to be dominated by anyone on the other side.

When she reached the suite of offices in the building which Sloane owned, she presented her card—Mrs. Eugene Harden—to the office boy. It was the first time she had given her card to anyone, and it seemed very strange to her—as if she were playing a part. After all, was there not a great difference between Mrs. Eugene Harden and Frederica Hartwell? And which was the happier?

The boy came back. "Mr. Sloane's clerk says he is gone for the day."

And then it seemed quite absurd to Frederica that she had been thinking so hard all the way down to the office; that she had a picture in her mind of the way Alexander Sloane would look when she came into his office; and that she had any determinations or any plans at all. How perfectly helpless she was as a human being in this game! Alexander Sloane was not there, and no amount of will and purpose and desire to protect Eugene could bring the interview about. She thought for a moment she might go to his house; but it was not likely he was at his house; he was there very little. Besides, there she might find Alec or Mrs. Sloane; and that would make it very much harder. Should she go back home—that is, back to Eugene's home?

The necessity for action was growing upon her. It would be easier to go up to the union headquarters; it would be easier to go out and find Maggie; to do almost anything than to go home and sit down and wait for something to happen.

She was passing a hotel on her way to the street car, for her feet were carrying her back to where Eugene was in spite of her indecision. She turned and went into

Digitized by Google

the writing room, sat down at the desk and wrote a short note to Gustav Lange, telling him to come, as soon as he got it, to her father's house on Desplaines Street. Then she called a bell boy, had him find a messenger, and sent the note to the union headquarters.

Instead of taking the car for the North Side she decided to walk to her father's house. Afterwards she never could remember that walk without suffering, for it seemed that she was walking away from everything which meant happiness for her in the future. It seemed that she was walking into a terrible disaster. She became more and more oppressed as she approached the viaduct and knew that she was almost there where she used to live. The people that she met on the street were moving shadows to her. As she passed each one, she wondered if he or she had ever suffered so. And it was not the suffering of loss; it was not the suffering of a great catastrophe; it was the suffering of mystery, of incomprehension. In spite of all that her father had taught her, in spite of all the sweetness of her childhood and youth, she felt intensely bitter—as though she were caught in a trap and was being mocked at.

When she got to the house and went up the short flight of steps in front and opened the door, she could have cried out. She leaned against the wall in the little entry and tried to regain her courage. She went into the study. It had a fearful, unhomelike look to her. There was no one there; there was no one anywhere in the house; and the house was unlocked. She carefully locked the back door and pulled down the shades in the kitchen which looked on the back porch, for she was afraid that Mrs. Schneider might come down, and she was not equal to talking to her; and she was afraid that Mrs. Flanagan might

Digitized by Google

come up the back stairs to ask about Maggie, and she could not concern herself now with Maggie.

She went back into the dining room, pausing for a moment before the door of her own room. She was glad that it was shut so that she did not have to look into it. Then she stopped in front of Anne's door, which was open. She saw that Anne had been packing, that her trunk was locked, and that her little belongings had been taken from the bureau. Some few pictures were stacked against the wall. Everything was upset. Anne had evidently decided to be conventional and to go home. And what would her father do now, she wondered?

Suddenly she saw herself living again in this little house and taking care of her father; and she felt as if years and years were stretching out ahead of her in utter loneliness and pulling her toward them. She could not see Eugene's face; she could not imagine that he was anywhere in the living world. She tried to think of the house which she had just left. It was all very dim and indistinct. Every once in a while there would be a quick gasp of her body as though it were already growing very hungry for some reality.

The study was the only room that she could bear to sit in, and it was hard to stay there. She took off her hat and gloves, went instinctively to the mirror in the side wall and looked at herself, moved one or two chairs into place, and then sat down near the window to wait for Lange. In a few minutes she found herself growing very chilly, and she went out into the kitchen, brought back coal and kindling, and made a fire. There was nothing else that could be done, nothing with which she could busy herself. She had only to wait.

There was a rising excitement in her. Back and forth,

Digitized by Google

back and forth she walked from the window to the fire. Whenever she was at the fireplace she hoped that the next time she looked out the window she would see him come; and then when she was at the window she would turn back and think that perhaps by the time she had gotten to the fireplace she would hear the door bell. The blood of the beast that tramps in its cage was waking in her. It is very easy to speak of a long life, but it is very hard to make anyone feel the long life that may lie within an hour unless one has lived through it. And there were two hours for Frederica.

She satisfied herself that her father had gone home with Anne. Probably Anne had not told him her reason for going, and he had not been curious or upset about it.

About half-past five she wondered if Eugene would eat his dinner without her, and she saw him very clearly for the first time. She grew almost wild; started to put her hat on once to go back to him, and then stopped and kept to her first intention of waiting there until Lange came. For she had believed that she would see Sloane in his office. The fact that she had deceived herself the first time did not affect the intensity of her own belief now.

At last, when the glow of the fire was making most of the light in the room, and the windows were becoming indistinct and shadowy, she heard steps outside that came up to the front door, and the bell rang. She went into the little dark hall and opened the door, and then, recognizing Lange, she went back into the study, and stood near the table, leaning against it, for her knees had grown suddenly weak and she was very white. The long folds of her gown fell almost straight and lay on the floor. In the half light she looked more unearthly and unreal than ever in her life. Lange closed the door behind him

Digitized by Google

and stood looking at her. And she looked back at him as at some one she had never seen. Had she ever seen him?

It was not Sloane's foreman, with the rough hair, unshaven face, and slouching shoulders, but a man whose bearing, whose dress, whose color, whose eyes, were those of a gentleman. In the dim light she leaned forward to look at him more closely. He answered her unspoken question.

"I am Gustav Lange."

She recognized his voice. "You surprised me," she answered. "Will you sit down?"

"You sent for me. What can I do? I am going away to-night."

"Please sit down," said Frederica, and seated herself in her father's chair at the desk, her elbows resting on the pile of manuscripts that lay there. Lange drew up a chair as close as possible, but the table was between them. He was watching her very closely, and she felt the same uneasiness that she always did in his presence. It was hard for her not to question him on his changed appearance, but she dreaded any personalities between them.

"You are going away to-night, Mr. Lange?" she asked.

"I tell you in confidence," he answered.

"You ought not to."

"But I trust you." He crossed his arms on the table, and she took hers off and leaned back against her chair.

"I mean you ought not to go away to-night," she said quickly.

"What do you want me to do?"

Whenever he spoke to her the pupils of his eyes seemed to dilate, and it made her start with unreasonable fear or resentment—she could not analyze her feeling.

"I want you to tell Mr. Sloane that you were respon-

Digitized by Google

sible for the fire in his yards." Frederica spoke slowly and carefully, watching to catch the effect of her words upon Lange.

He smiled and showed very white, even teeth between full, well-shaped lips. "Why do you want me to do that?" he asked, and had the advantage of her in a moment, for she had expected denial or indignation.

"I want you to tell the union, too, that you are responsible for that fire."

"Why?" he asked sharply.

"Because you are," said Frederica, glad that she had cut through his smiling superiority. He regained his advantage, however, by allowing a pause to lengthen while he looked at her hands as they rested on the edge of the table. She had the sense of going into the dark after his attention every time she addressed him. He seemed to be without curiosity as to her reason for interfering. It made her more and more afraid. She had imagined that she would startle him by her request at the first, and then that she would have to make a strong appeal to his better nature. But she seemed to have been caught in her own purpose.

"You feel very sorry for Mr. Scanlan?" asked Lange in a sympathetic way.

"Yes, that is—" Frederica tripped in answer, because she knew that it was not her interest in John Scanlan which had prompted her. She had not foreseen that Lange might question her.

He followed her hesitation by a bend of his head. "Perhaps it is because Mrs. Scanlan insists upon your sympathy."

"Yes," said Frederica helplessly.

"And she is in a position to make you very unhappy."

Digitized by Google

Then Frederica realized that Lange knew about the agreement between herself and Alec and Mrs. Scanlan. She bowed her head on her arms crossed upon the table, and gave a long sob. She felt in a way relieved in spite of the humiliation of having anyone know.

Lange rose and came to her side of the table. "Poor little girl!" he said softly.

Face buried, she listened with fascinated amazement to the new sound of his voice. This man who was standing there could not be Gustav Lange.

"Why are you so frightened of Mrs. Scanlan? No one will believe her."

"It is because of his work," she said. "It's true, isn't it," she went on, "that if Mr. Sloane proved that I was not his wife, if Mr. Sloane told the newspapers that he had deceived me, that everybody would believe in Mr. Sloane and disbelieve in Mr.—Harden?" With the courage which was coming now, she began to feel his influence less and to think of him as Alexander Sloane's foreman, in spite of his unusual appearance.

"That is very true, and Mr. Sloane plans to give that story to-morrow to the papers."

Frederica's face grew rigid. "Then I shall give the papers the story of his wickedness to-night." She crumpled some of the pages of manuscript in her hands.

"But I doubt if you can persuade the papers to take your story. You have nothing to back it, have you, and Mr. Sloane is a prominent man."

"What shall I do?" said Frederica. She spoke to herself, but Lange, who still stood looking down at her, answered her.

"If I can be sure of your desire to save your—to save Mr. Harden's position with the radicals and working peo-

Digitized by Google

ple, I could tell you the one thing you could do, to close Mr. Sloane's lips and bring public sympathy to Mr. Harden's side."

Lange spoke as though in doubt himself; and that brought decision into Frederica's mind. She waited, but he did not go on. Instead he turned and walked the length of the room. In the gathering dusk she fancied a likeness to Eugene in his way of walking, and in the curious way he held his head as he stopped in front of the open fire and looked into it.

She rose and went over to where he was, afraid that the possible solution of her problem was not to be given her after all.

"You cannot know how sure *I* am that I want him to have success in this. You must see yourself how disgrace for him would mean that everything would go to pieces. One man's influence is sometimes the keystone in the structure built by many men through a long time. You get so used to believing that it is just a class struggle, a struggle between crowds indistinguishable. You forget that there have always been leaders and there always will be. Eugene is one of the leaders, and if he is destroyed——"

She had come quite close to him in her earnestness, and he was not looking at her but at the fire. She did not know what he was fighting within him, and she went on intensely:

"Mr. Lange, I would do anything, anything, to save him."

"You don't care that he deceived you?" The question came suddenly and startled her into abrupt confession.

"He didn't deceive me—not really. I was the one that wanted that we should live together without the law."

Digitized by Google

"You?"

"Yes," said Frederica, "I *begged* him to take me, and he was sorry for me. I pretended to myself that I believed him, and he thinks I believe that—that it is all right. But I don't care so much about myself—not while there is this great conflict. It would be different if he were not a leader."

"There is one thing you can do to gain your end—" But he stopped as though it were hard to come to the point.

"Tell me!" said Frederica desperately.

"You can go off—to-night—with Sloane's son. Then he will have to keep still."

Frederica stared at him.

He came nearer to her. "You said you could do anything."

No words came to her lips. She was motionless and staring at him. He watched her, his eyes shining with some victory behind them.

"Sloane would keep still because it was his own son."

"I understand," said Frederica quietly. Then she threw back her head and reached up her arms as though throwing off some burdening thought.

Lange seized her hands as they fell again at her sides, and, bending over, kissed her palms and her fingers.

The fury of his lips reached her, and she tried to pull her hands away from him. "You insult—oh, no, I cannot be insulted," she said in a voice from which all life had gone out. "But I can't do that!" she said.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X

THE RIOT

IT was dark when Harden left the house. The loneliness of the place had compelled him to go out into the open. The cook, who had served his dinner to him alone, just as the night before she had served Frederica's, was more than ever surprised; and she complained volubly of Maggie's departure.

Involuntarily Eugene set out to walk, and with long strides covered the distance between the house and the business part of the city. Then quite as involuntarily he found himself turning toward the West Side, and, with his nerves resisting, his feet carried him on over into that part of town which had become so familiar to him during the past months. He saw a light in the union headquarters, paused irresolutely on the street corner, then, shrugging his shoulders, went on toward the Haymarket. There were several halls, small and unpretentious enough, which were placarded as meeting places for the protest of the working people. The day before there had been an outbreak further up on the West Side, and several persons had been killed in the fights between the police and the strikers. The outbreak had been a significant event to the striking lumbermen, who had no official connection with these factory workers, but whose spirit of revolt was quite as strong. To-night from every part of the city

Digitized by Google

the working people, and those who had taken sides with them, were coming toward these meeting places to show by their gatherings that they would not stand the oppression of the police and the ruthless slaughter of their fellowmen.

Eugene had not read much of the disturbance. He had been so concerned with the particular work in which he was engaged. He had felt so certain of success in his effort to keep this one strong union intact and make it a powerful wedge in his larger plans, that he had scarcely compassed the idea of the uptown trouble. And now he was surprised to see that the meetings were better attended than was usual.

The streets were rather dark where he was—neither well lighted nor well paved. There was nothing in that part of town to indicate any millennium or any great change for the betterment of industrial conditions. The people hurrying belatedly into this or that place of refreshment, for there was certainly no place of amusement down there, were all filled with one idea of spoken protest.

Harden himself was to have spoken that night for one of these meetings, but he passed the hall without going in and walked on until he came to the corner of Desplaines Street. He wanted more than anything else to follow the narrow, dark street to where she was. But he would not. He walked several blocks in the direction toward her house and then he turned and came back.

He had passed the police station, and on his return he was surprised to see that a regular battalion of police was standing in front. He went to an onlooker and asked what that meant. "In God's country," said the man, "we are looking for trouble." He spoke sneeringly and left Harden standing there.

Digitized by Google

The police moved up the street, and Eugene, rather idly, followed them. He thought they were undoubtedly parading in order to impress the gathering crowds with their authority.

In the distance he saw a crowd of several hundreds, standing almost in one body about a wagon, from whose end a man was speaking loudly and forcibly. He saw that the crowd was quiet, ignorant of the approaching bluecoats, and he wondered what would happen when this solid body of moving men began to press upon the crowd which already filled the street from curb to curb. He had not long to wait. Standing on the corner, disliking to get into the thick of what might be a disagreeable fray of the sort that had been more or less common these last few days, he heard the captain call to the crowd to disperse, and he heard the hisses and the protests of various members of the crowd—refusals to disperse, claims of freedom and right to stand in the street. Again Eugene shrugged his shoulders as though to some intimate, commenting audibly upon the "land of the free." And as he turned to go he heard a terrific explosion. He looked back. Many of the police were lying on the ground. A bomb had been thrown. From where and by whom no one knew.

The police began to fire, and there were cries and groans from the huddling masses of frightened auditors, who had been taken completely unawares by the bomb. An immense rage filled Harden's breast. Why should the police shoot these men who had been listening and not done anything? He rushed back into the crowd, forced his way to the police captain, and just as he was about to speak to him, to demand that he order the firing stopped, he was struck from behind.

Harden lost his balance, but did not fall, and swung

Digitized by Google

round to meet his antagonist, but there was no one in the pressing crowd who was even looking at him. He heard, however, an excited voice saying: "Get out of my road!" and he saw a man pushing frantically through the mass of humans who were trying to get into danger instead of away from it. Harden followed the one opposing figure and recognized the man as Scanlan. As soon as he had discovered who had struck him he went on through the crowd in another direction. It sickened him that a small personal vengeance should be expressed to-night of all nights. He had no wish to get closer to the Irishman. He was through with the affairs of the man and with the affairs of the union.

Scanlan, with the idea of possible pursuit and discovery, looked back over his shoulder and saw Harden, apparently unhurt, going off through the thinning crowd. Again the frenzy which had prompted his first blow seized him, and he turned back to follow Harden. The crowd closed between them, and the Austrian was not conscious of the reawakened hatred in pursuit of him. He was deep in a new realization of the mob's meaning. He was conscious that within five minutes the work of years had been destroyed; that this terrible deed would be laid at the door of the workingmen, of the radicals who had admitted their discontent. The violent deed of one man and the mob's presence had destroyed all that he had been working for since he had come to Chicago full of enthusiasm and ideals. These thoughts shut out even the memory of Scanlan, who was but a few feet behind him, cursing the human barrier which still surged between them.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI

THE MARK OF MEN

DR. HARTWELL came in and saw with surprise that Frederica sat evidently overcome with some great emotion. She straightened as she saw him, and he looked with amazement at Lange's changed appearance, but most of all with concern for Frederica.

"What has happened, my child?" he said.

"Nothing." She stood up and tossed the hair out of her eyes with the little motion of determination she knew so well. "Nothing has happened. I was talking with Mr. Lange about the strike."

Then she held out her hand to Lange. "I am sure," she said, "that you will do the right thing," and Lange, who already knew that the story had been spread by Sloane, bent over her hand with the courtesy of the old world and left.

Frederica's impatience to be gone was battling with the necessity of giving some reason why she was there. "I have been waiting a very long time for you, father," she said. "Where have you been?"

"I went with Anne," he said. "She felt that she must go home, and I carried her bag."

"Yes," said Frederica, "Anne is very unhappy."

The doctor made no reply.

Digitized by Google

"Anne cares very much for you, father."

"Yes, yes," said Dr. Hartwell, "I have also thought so."

"I felt jealous at first," said Frederica; "but if she cares for you, try and make her happy."

Dr. Hartwell could not understand what prompted these words, and he was becoming more and more impressed with the pallor which Frederica was showing in spite of her self-control.

"You look very ill, Freda. Is Eugene going to call for you here after the meeting?"

"What meeting?" asked Frederica quickly.

"He was to speak to-night to a protest meeting; and I am going to speak, too. He is going to make public to-night the facts which he has learned about Sloane and the Trust. He is going to give an opportunity to the people of this town to learn the real situation."

Something in her father's manner showed Frederica that at last he had taken sides—had made his definite choice, with and not against Eugene. She came forward to him. "Father, you must go at once, and you must tell him not to speak."

"Why?" asked Dr. Hartwell. "Why, Freda?"

Twice she walked the length of the room trying to make up her mind whether she could say more. At the far end she turned and looked at her father. "Can you keep him from speaking without knowing why?"

"Of course not," said the doctor, irritation of her mysterious manner showing through his concern. "Of course not. What nonsense! What has come over you?"

It was a very little thing, the tone of his voice, but it was just that small flippant irritation at her manner (which she knew herself was incomprehensible, but knew, as well, that it was concealing the tremendous problem)

Digitized by Google

that was the last straw. All of her self-control, all of her determination never to put into words again the things that she had heard, forsook her. Standing where she was, away from the light, and as far away from her father as the room allowed her to be, she made her appeal to him.

"Then I will tell you why," she said. "I will tell you why he must not speak to-night. Mr. Sloane intends to ruin him. Mr. Sloane is going to say that Eugene has a wife in Austria—and so destroy his influence with the unions."

Dr. Hartwell did not say a word. A hundred questions were in his mind, but any one of them seemed absurd. "Your husband?"

"Yes," said Frederica.

"Has Sloane lost his mind?"

"No," she said. "He believes—that he has proofs."

"Have you seen them?"

"No," said Freda. "I went to his office, but he was not there."

"Then it is a trick. I believe him capable now of anything. Who told you?"

"Alec," said Frederica. She seemed to have strength now for only one word at a time. But she was gaining more as she felt her father's confidence in Eugene was behind hers.

"Does Alec believe?" asked the doctor.

"Yes," said Frederica.

Then he pondered. "Tell me the rest," he said fiercely. "What did Alec say to you?"

"Alec told me that these papers came from their representative in Vienna."

The doctor wheeled about and faced her. "I should call that proof, Frederica. Alec wouldn't lie."

Digitized by Google

"There may be some mistake," said Frederica.

"Have you told Eugene?"

She shook her head.

"Why not?"

"I did not dare."

"Why not?" he said more loudly.

"Because he told me that night when we were engaged—he told me that I would be asking questions of him, that I would be like all the other women and not trust him—and he told me that there was something in his life that he did not want to talk about. And I trusted him." She leaned against the table for support.

"But if you heard this story," said the doctor, "trust or not, you should have put it to him and let him meet it. You have behaved most foolishly."

"But can't you see," she said, "if I had put it to him, he would believe that I did not trust him? And even if it isn't true, he would not care for me any more. He is that kind of a man. I am afraid of his silence—and I am afraid of his eyes if he looked at me after I had asked him. He would not answer me. He would not have told me."

Dr. Hartwell went toward her. "Have you lost your mind, Frederica Hartwell? Don't you realize that if he is a man he will want to face this? But you believe that it is true—that is why you do not dare to ask him. Now tell me why—tell me why you don't trust him." He took hold of her two wrists, and all the determination which may have been lacking throughout his life, devoted as it had been to the things of meekness and resignation, shone in his face. "Tell me why you don't trust him, Frederica. What do you know?"

She tried to pull away from him. She felt that she

Digitized by Google

could not answer; and yet she knew that she would. "Because," she said, "that night when I went to him he told me he was not free."

The doctor flung her hands away from him. "I don't understand," he said. "If he told you that, how is it you are married?"

For the second time she was telling the story of the most sacred moments that they had spent together—the hour when they had learned, each one, the love of the other; and her dignity, which had been in silence, fell from her.

"He told me he was not free, and I wanted to go with him anyway. Of course, I did not understand. I did not know what that was, because I did not know what he was. But he told me, too, that if anyone found me in his rooms they could ruin him. And you found me in his rooms, and you brought Mr. Sloane with you. So I lied—because he told me no one in this country knew."

Immense anger possessed Dr. Hartwell. Without looking once at Frederica, he walked up and down the room. "So you have been lying all these months," he said. "So you have become—" He paused before the word, but she heard it and regained herself a little. For although he might fling her to the ground she would not touch the mud that was near her.

"No," she said, "because he came the next day to me and told me that he was free."

By this time the doctor's anger was so great that he hardly heard what she said.

"And I believed him," said Frederica, trying to penetrate his deafness. "I believed him."

The doctor faced her suddenly. "Do you believe him now?"

Digitized by Google

She was silent. "Do not ask me," she said.

"So that is the reason"—he spoke slowly and deeply—"so that is the reason you are afraid to face the story."

"I do not know what I am afraid of," said Frederica. "I do not know."

And she turned and hid her face on her arm. At the sight of her there, dishonored, betrayed, and responsible for her own betrayal, the doctor felt himself capable of murder. He took his hat and went to the door.

Frederica sprang after him and took hold of his arm. "What are you going to do?" she said. "Tell me."

"I am going to find Eugene."

And she read that pride, that hatred, that strength for murder, which can be read in the faces of the fathers whose daughters are without honor.

"No," she said, "do not go. I'll go. I'll ask him. I will tell him to meet this story. I believe he can meet this story." She was feverish, eager, afraid of all things, of her father's leaving the room; and when she talked she tried to pull him away from the door, to get between him and the door.

"*You*," he said, and the word was full of the contempt of woman.

As they stood there they heard the sound of a tremendous explosion. The house shook with it; the windows rattled. They started, and for a moment left the crisis they were facing to question the crisis that was being faced somewhere else.

Frederica was the first to speak. "What was that?" she asked.

"Dynamite," said her father.

And her first thought went out in a cry: "Eugene!"

Digitized by Google

for she knew now that he must be somewhere near at some one of the meetings.

There was the noise of running on the street below them; there were a few confused cries in the distance, and the noise of shooting.

"It is a riot," said her father.

Frederica stood staring at him. He could not speak to her. They heard Mrs. Schneider running down the front stairs and out into the street. They heard the patrol wagon, and they heard again the cries of dismay, of terror, the mysterious human sound when men face something which they cannot explain. Then some one ran up their steps, the door was thrown open violently, and Alec Sloane stood there. His face was as white as Frederica's, and he looked at her.

"Frederica," he said, and she knew that her cry had been called out by what had happened.

The doctor had regained his composure. He asked Alec what it was, and Alec told him in a few words that a bomb had been thrown into the police marching down upon the crowd who were listening to a man talking on the streets.

"But the shots?" asked the doctor.

"The police were shooting into the crowd."

Frederica felt in that moment not the despair of one who has lost through death, but the despair of one who has lost through her own weakness. Not one moment before, from the very depths of her she had spoken her distrust of the man that she loved. Her father had heard it, and he had thought only of the conventional dishonor of his daughter, and he had not thought once of the tremendous dishonor in her own soul. Before the moment of catastrophe out there on the street there had been this

Digitized by Google

great catastrophe in her own soul; and no one knew it but herself.

They thought her overcome with the horror of his possible death. Alec had heard some one cry out, "Harden is killed!" It had been a cry of affection in a man's voice. It had been a call to those who had believed in Harden, who had known what he was. And Alec had not waited. He had come at once to get Dr. Hartwell and he had found Freda.

By some strange chance he had been wandering about the streets, held in a way by the fascination of this crowd of protesting people. He had been listening here and there in the groups that stood on the street corners, to find out whether or not the story had been spread which his father declared that afternoon must be made public. He had been living through a great agony, because he knew what it would mean to Frederica. And he knew, besides, what his father was. He had lost his respect for him, and yet he would not take the weapon out of his father's hands which was to be used against the woman he loved. Even if she deserved that weapon, he was overcome with the shame of its use, and he had been walking the streets trying to regain some calm and to see what would come out of it all. He had heard and seen the destruction, then heard the cry about Harden, and had come at once.

Again the door was thrust open violently, and Gustav Lange came in, closing it behind him and facing Frederica. He straightened and turned to the doctor, but spoke very calmly with a touch of sarcasm.

"It is rather too dangerous for one to walk out there. I have taken the liberty of coming in." There was something in his face which was so much more than his words that they waited. "I ought to say, perhaps, before I ac-

Digitized by Google

cept the hospitality which I know you are offering, that the police are chasing me. But," he said in a flippant way, "they didn't see me come in. I shall not stay long—only time to get my breath."

Suddenly he lurched back, and Alec Sloane caught him. "You've been shot," said Alec.

"Yes," said Lange, "your American policeman takes very good aim. Still, it may have been by accident. I am not an egotist, nor am I enough of an extremist to have accepted the bullet in order to play the rôle of martyr."

Frederica had crouched down and was not listening to them. Suddenly she sprang to her feet. "I must go out!" she said. "What is the reason I am staying here? I must go!" She ran to the door.

Lange himself put out his hand. There was blood on it. "There is no reason why you should go."

"But Eugene!"

"He is quite safe," said Lange. "He is quite well."

Frederica did not believe him; Alec did not believe him; and Dr. Hartwell did not care.

"I think," said Lange, "that he will be here directly."

Behind all the words that were spoken in the room was the noise of confusion from outside. It increased instead of growing less. Wrath and terror, revenge and resistance, were abroad in the streets. It kept them from speaking.

Lange rose from the couch where Alec had helped to seat him. "I think," he said, "that I must go now."

"You are not able," said Dr. Hartwell. "Stay where you are."

"But," said Lange, "it may put you in an embarrassing position."

Digitized by Google

"Where is Eugene Harden?" said Dr. Hartwell.

"I think," he said, "that he is coming. I am quite sure that I saw him on his way here."

Even as he spoke Harden came into the hall and looked from one to the other of their faces. The tragedy of what he had just seen was written on every line of his. His hair was pushed back and there was dust on his coat and on his hands. He looked at Dr. Hartwell.

"Thank God you're here!" he said. "I was afraid that you had kept your engagement to speak to the men." Then suddenly he clenched his hands and raised them. "Why should you speak to the men? Why should anyone in this country concern himself with the conditions of these men? Brute beasts!" he said. "Animals without courage! Animals who have no trust—and trust is the mark of men!"

Frederica had been looking at him as though he were not real, as though he was somebody who had come back from the dead. At his last words she cried out. He went toward her to take her hand, but Dr. Hartwell stepped between them and folded his arms.

"Don't touch her," he said; "she is still my daughter."

Harden looked at him. "Oh," he said, "so they have come to you with that story." Then, without moving, he looked once at the floor and raised his eyes again to Dr. Hartwell. "And you believed it, too?"

There was a moment of absolute quiet in the room, and then he laughed. "Trust is the mark of men."

Lange was watching him from where he sat, and a look of great victory was in his eyes. He spoke: "Trust is the dishonor of woman," he said.

Harden faced him. "What do you mean?"

"Nothing," said Lange.

Digitized by Google

Harden moved, for the doctor stood between him and Frederica, and he challenged her. "You heard that story," he said. Her large terrified eyes were raised to him. "You heard that story"—he took a deep breath—"and you believed."

If she had known that the light which she saw shining behind his fixed gaze was hope that she would deny, she would have denied; but he had convicted her. He had spoken the truth. All that she had lived through in the past forty-eight hours came to her plainly now as distrust. All the pride which she had felt to keep silent for him, in trying to defend him in her small woman's way, in trying to keep the story down instead of facing it with him—all *that* came to her mind as the evidence of her inner distrust. The moment's suspicion which she had of him when he told her he was free, and she had yielded to her feeling for him, had poisoned all her trust in him. If she had been honorable, if she had had strength, if she had been anything but a girl in her first burst of passion, she would, that night in front of her father's fire, after her day of search for work, have had the strength to say, "I suspect you. I believe you are lying to me for my sake, and because you, too, are stirred as I am."

But she had let that moment slip; she had passed on into her dream; she had been as completely surrendered to the things of the flesh, to the beauties and the luxuries he had given her, to the comfort that lay in ease and in leisure, as any woman who ever sold her body to a passer-by on the street.

The thing which crept into Eden was very small and it took a long time to reach the ear of Eve. And it is possible that Eve saw the tiny thing come in and pre-

Digitized by Google

tended to ignore it because it whispered then to her that it was the master of the Garden of Eden.

Words did not come to Frederica, but her first honest self-consciousness did; and she turned away from him. There was something in his face which made them all keep still until Alec stepped toward him and held out his hand.

"I did what I could," he said, "but I was glad to believe that it was true, even though I knew in my heart that it was not."

Then his hand dropped, for Harden had not seen it. He had only looked into Alec's eyes, and the contempt in his own had grown greater.

The next moment Harden looked at Lange. "What are you going to do?" he said. "The story out there is that you threw the bomb."

Lange did not flinch. "Why shouldn't I have done that?" he said. "I am a lover of the rights of the people. I enjoyed the protests which I heard to-night against the tyranny of capital in the land of the free." Again Lange lurched and they saw his wound, which they had forgotten, for the blood was on his coat.

Dr. Hartwell spoke to Alec. "Get the doctor," he said.

"No," said Lange in a loud voice, "there is no need of one."

But Harden told Alec to go at once. He went over to Lange to take off the man's coat and stanch the wound. Lange resisted him.

"Don't touch me," he said. "If I *am* bleeding, I am bleeding inwardly. It's the most I can do."

Frederica from where she was standing was watching the two men, but the belated silence which had fallen upon her did not allow her to speak. An explanation of Lange's behavior was what she desired most of all, but

Digitized by Google

the contempt that had shown in Eugene's eyes when he looked at her, kept her lips closed.

Harden, in spite of protest, had made Lange comfortable. He lay stretched out on the couch, motionless, with his eyes closed.

Suddenly the noise of running in the street increased, and there were the sounds of a chase and the cries of "Catch him! That's the one!"

Lange sat up and opened his eyes quickly. "Who is it?" he cried, and would have gone to the window had he had the strength. They were all listening, but they had no answer for him. The noise died away in the distance.

Lange looked from one to the other, and it was almost as though he had lost consciousness for a moment. "Who was it?" he said. "Who was it?"

A great deal lay in the question as he asked it. There was knowledge and fear, but not fear for himself.

They heard steps in the hall, and thought that it was Alec coming back, but it proved to be Mr. Flanagan when the door opened. His policeman's coat was muddy and torn into shreds on the right side. He came into the light, a little dazed, and it seemed as if the anger which was in him kept him from speech. He looked toward Lange. "God damn you!" he said.

"He has," said Lange.

And when Dr. Hartwell started in anger at what he felt was blasphemy, Lange turned to him. "I assure you He damned me before I was born."

Flanagan went close to Lange. "Where is Maggie?" he said.

"I don't know," said the Hungarian.

"You're under arrest," said Flanagan. "You threw the bomb."

Digitized by Google

Lange laughed. "It was not a good throw. It missed you."

Flanagan was by this time beside himself, and he jerked Lange to his feet so that Harden had to interfere. "He is a sick man," he said. "Leave him alone. Justice can wait a while, I think."

"He is under arrest," said Flanagan; but he took his hands off Lange's shoulder.

"By order of your employer?" asked Lange, showing his teeth in a smile which disguised the pain he was feeling.

Flanagan looked at him without answering. Then he asked again: "Where is Maggie?"

Lange made no answer, but again he lay back and closed his eyes; and even Flanagan was quieted by the pain in the man's face. He turned to Harden.

"Mrs. Schneider told me to-day!" he said. "There is a child coming!"

Lange opened his eyes and stared in terror at Flanagan. "A child?" he said. "Get Maggie here quick! Go for Maggie at once!" He spoke in a low, intense way which fairly pushed Flanagan out of the room, and they all regarded him with fresh distrust, and seemed not to notice that he said once under his breath, "A child!" Then he closed his eyes again.

There was nothing for them to do but to wait for the doctor. Frederica was the first one to recover her self-control. She went to the medicine cabinet, got brandy and gave it to Eugene without a word. Then she stood holding the bottle while he put some between the man's lips. The faces of the two were brought very close together. Lange gulped down the brandy.

"Eugene," said Frederica, "that is your brother!"

Digitized by Google

Lange turned on his side as though she had spoken from another world, and as he looked at her his eyes grew large and full of many thoughts.

"Yes," he said very softly, "you are right."

The brandy renewed his strength, and he insisted again on sitting up and facing them. But he spoke directly though with long pauses to Frederica, and she did not move.

"I am his brother," he said. "The trust of a woman in his father gave me life. I was born without the law. I lived when I was a child where I could see his father, who was my father, giving honor to his mother, while my mother carried the burdens of the peasants on her shoulders.

"He had the honor of the law, and I came to take it from him. But I am not going back. I know that now. I am not going to be able to tell her of success."

He covered his face with his hands for an instant, then throwing back his head, he looked at Harden with a sort of defiance that had much pride in it and the spirit of vengeance unsatisfied.

It seemed as though Harden had not realized what was being said. He did not seem able to believe the words that fell on his ears. All that he said was, "So it was you that told that story?"

"Yes," said Lange.

Bitterness crept into Harden's voice. His own egotism mastered any feeling that he might have for the half-brother sitting opposite him and telling the story of his own bitterness. "Your sense of success ought to be great," he said. "They believed that story."

"But it was not true," said Lange. "Sloane's got the papers. I can make him show you. There is an explana-

Digitized by Google

tion coming to you. You will be all the stronger with the union. I have made a mess of it because— What's the use of talking?" He leaned back, but did not lie down. And after a moment he looked at Frederica again. "You're married."

Frederica leaned toward Eugene. "So I am your wife!" she said, and on the instant that the words had passed her lips she knew that she had confessed to him a second time that she had distrusted him.

"We are bound by the law, Frederica," was his answer, which to Dr. Hartwell seemed a simple acknowledgment that the story had been false. But to Frederica it meant that he had closed and locked the door upon her. After that all the rest that followed seemed of no importance to her.

Alec came back with the doctor, and Lange was taken into Dr. Hartwell's bedroom and made as comfortable as possible. It could not be said whether or not he was dangerously wounded, but it did not seem wise to probe for the bullet, for he had already lost so much blood. He had not bled inwardly, as he had boasted, for his clothes were saturated.

Dr. Hartwell wanted to go out to find what the true state of affairs was, but Alec insisted that there was too much danger for him. "You have all been too close to this strike," he said. "I heard them talking of you out there."

And even as he spoke, a short, thickset low-browed captain of the police thrust open the door, and without asking leave or respecting the rights of the American citizen, faced both Harden and Hartwell. "You are under arrest," he said, "both of you."

They looked at him questioningly. Dr. Hartwell's ig-

Digitized by Google

norance of the law kept him from asking any of the formal questions which it was his right to ask. He turned rather helplessly to Harden. "What must we do?" he said.

"If he wishes us to accompany him," Harden said, "I suppose that is what we had better do."

Frederica, in perfect terror, came over and questioned the captain. "Why are they under arrest?"

"For conspiracy—as accomplices in this awful deed."

It was unbelievable. To Dr. Hartwell it seemed unreal and vague. To Harden, who had just passed through what for him was the most bitter experience he could have, it did not much matter. It was all of a piece with what he had been going through. That afternoon he had been accused, and not even asked to refute the story of his own dishonor. This evening he had sensed the same distrust in the eyes of Dr. Hartwell and of his wife that he had seen in the eyes of the men for whom he had been working for months. And he had just heard an almost melodramatic story of the desire for vengeance, in the words of Lange. Arrest on the charge of conspiracy, arrest on the charge of throwing a bomb, was indeed a small matter. He could get up no excitement over it.

Hartwell admired his son-in-law's courage, and decided to do exactly as Eugene should suggest. But Eugene was without suggestion. He turned to the policeman after only the slightest pause. "I am quite at your command," he said. "I have no doubt that you have a superior to whom you will bring me."

The man flushed. Egotism and vanity were his moving forces. He was playing a great rôle, this of protection of the people; and to his imagination, bred as it had been upon the thoughts of jail, arrests, and upon the course of man's pilgrimage from original sin to the penitentiary,

Digitized by Google

he saw himself looming up as a hero. It was very easy for him to imagine that these respectable gentlemen were dangerous enemies of the state. He did not recognize it in himself; but he, too, was getting even with society. He was forcing society to admit that he was a man of power; so his dignity increased when Harden spoke of a superior.

"I am in command to-night," he said.

As Dr. Hartwell and Harden moved toward the door, Frederica saw that there were several policemen outside, for the police captain's personal courage was not so great as his presumption. The sight of the blue-coated figures standing below the steps robbed Frederica of her fear of Eugene's contempt. Instinctively she knew that her father's position could be cleared at once. His very weakness and hesitation in this strike were to be his best defense. If he had spoken with greater courage, and had come out for the men, he might have been in danger. But if it could be proved that any man in the union had thrown the bomb, Harden could be implicated. Frederica went to him and threw herself on his breast. He stood quite motionless, not even raising his arm to encircle her waist, and she felt that he was cold and absolutely hard. Yet the touch of her face on his coat was something to her comfort. She believed that he would come out of this danger, because of that very resistance which she was feeling.

But she knew, too, that she no longer belonged to him; that the moment when he had looked to her for denial of distrust, and she had not given it to him, had not been *able* to give it to him, that moment was the last one in which he looked to her as the woman he loved.

She went to her father and took his hand. "This will come out all right," she said.

Digitized by Google

Alec Sloane came into the room from where he had been with the doctor, and he grew very much excited; put a hundred questions to the captain and a hundred to Harden; got no replies that were satisfactory; and as the two went out with the police captain, he seized his hat and dashed off uptown to do something—he did not know what.

Frederica was left alone with the doctor and Lange, and Lange had his eyes closed. Very shortly the doctor went, and said that he would send a nurse at once. Frederica sat by the bed in her father's room and watched the man lying there. Underneath all the emotions that were pressing upon her—the terror when she felt that this man might die while she was alone with him, that Eugene might spend the night in jail, that her father would be thus publicly disgraced—underneath all this was a sort of gladness that there was something for her to do; that she need not go back into that little room of hers with its blue and white trimmings and its memories. Just as inconsequent as this is the human mind.

After fifteen or twenty minutes Lange opened his eyes. "Can you get Maggie?" he said.

"I don't know where she is," answered Frederica.

"She is at my rooms, and they may be sending there for me. Perhaps they have sent there for me already."

"Maggie was with you?" asked Frederica, and all her belief in the little Irish girl went out.

"I want to see her," he said, and his voice was very weak.

"As soon as the nurse comes I will go for her," said Frederica.

The nurse came very shortly—a stout elderly woman, phlegmatic, unthinking, and competent.

Digitized by Google

Frederica did not feel it necessary to make any explanations, and bending over Lange, she whispered, "I will go now." For whether or not she trusted Maggie, the mystery of these things was so great that she would do what was asked of her.

The street was quiet. She had his address and he lived only two blocks away. When she got there the house was dark. She thought of ringing the bell; and then, the chance that the door might be open, and that she could go to the rooms which he had said he occupied in the rear upstairs, without letting anyone know, seemed a better plan to her. The door was unlocked; she crept through the dark hall to a staircase, expecting every moment that some door would be opened and she would be discovered like a thief. At the head of the stairs she found the hall stopped short, so the door that she tried must belong to his rooms; but it was locked, and there was no sound on the other side. She tried it several times, and thought she heard some one stirring within. Then she called through the keyhole to Maggie, and there was no answer. Twice she called, "Maggie!" Then she bethought herself, and she spoke low, but very distinctly: "Gustav Lange is dying and sent me for you."

Maggie must have been close to the door, for it opened at once, quickly and noiselessly, and she stood there in the dark, all dressed and trembling.

"Come," said Frederica, and they went down the stairs together and out into the street without being discovered.

Frederica called the nurse out of the room when she got back, and then sent Maggie in; and she never knew what it was that was said there, but when the little Irish girl came out her face was transfigured. She said nothing. She came and sat in a chair near Frederica and folded

Digitized by Google

her hands in her lap. "He won't have the priest," he said, "so he must not die. He must not die!" Then she sat perfectly quiet and looked at the floor, and her lips moved. Frederica knew she was praying.

Occasionally the nurse moved around in the other room and came out for a glass of water or to look at the clock; but all night long the two girls sat there, Maggie busy with her prayers, Frederica passing through the darkest hours she had ever known. In some way the bomb and the riot, the consequences of it all, were far away from her thoughts. Over and over again she said to herself, "I did not trust him. He knows I did not trust him. I have lost him."

She sat most of the night very quiet, and as though the very strength of these thoughts bound her like chains, and then terror came on her. She began to picture Eugene. Of her father she thought very little. For did not her father have his philosophy, his natural optimism, and his belief that nothing could happen to a good man? But there was Eugene, quite alone, and knowing that she had not trusted him. She could see him hard and immovable. She could see the lines of his face deepening as the thoughts passed back and forth in his mind of what he had learned that evening. And the terror of the picture grew so great that she began to walk the floor.

Maggie did not look up. Maggie was concerned with the mystery of death that hung in the next room, and Frederica wondered dumbly why the girl did not go in and stay with Lange.

The lamp began to go out, and the shadows in the room grew heavier. Frederica went into the dining room and brought in another lamp and put it on the table; then blew out the one that was flickering; and the smell

Digitized by Google

of the coal oil and of the burned wick made her sick. And after that night it always made her sick.

And then she began to walk again and to say over to herself, "I did not trust him, and he knows."

In the morning she was not tired. She was still walking. The nurse came in and asked her to go again for the doctor, and Maggie went into the room where Lange was as Frederica went out the front door.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII

LANGE AND THE LAW

ABOUT eight o'clock Dr. Hartwell, looking pale and worn, came into the house. Eugene was at union headquarters. They had spent most of the night at the police station, although there had been no warrant for the arrest, and the ordinary formalities of the law had been absolutely set aside. Then Alec Sloane had appeared, and using his father's influence, had released the two men. He had gone at once with Harden up to headquarters, for it was necessary to find out what the feeling was there.

Frederica heard these things, but they gave her no relief. She had not really sensed the arrest the night before as anything more than an inconvenience, and the sight of Lange's wound came the nearest to bringing home to her the real situation. This morning a sort of second consciousness allowed her to forget herself and her own problem, and she kept wondering if Lange had thrown the bomb, and what was to be done.

Dr. Hartwell took the precaution of locking the front door. Then he went in and spoke to the nurse. "This friend of ours," he said, "must not be disturbed to-day, you understand."

And the nurse, who looked inscrutable, whose heavy face was without much expression, suddenly beamed upon

Digitized by Google

the doctor. "I think," she said, "that he is a hero. My husband would have done that if he had lived."

Dr. Hartwell started back in amazement. "My good woman," he said, "you are jumping at conclusions. There is nothing which he has done which could have any connection with your words."

Then the doctor went off to Anne's room and fell on his knees and begged to be forgiven for lying, not knowing that his weak attempt had failed of its mark. He had made up his mind to stand by Lange right or wrong, and he was almost shriveled within because he really believed that Lange was responsible for the catastrophe. He justified himself by saying again and again, "They must prove it by the law. They must show legal proofs before I desert him."

Freda was getting breakfast when the back door opened, and in came Anne, white of face and trembling like a sick child. "I came the moment I read the paper," she said. "Where is he?"

Freda, whose hands were occupied, nodded toward the front room, and Anne rushed in. The doctor was not there. She found him kneeling beside her bed, and she sat down on the edge of it, crying. It was no longer possible for the doctor to ignore the fact that he was loved by Anne. He was a little embarrassed, but as he rose to his feet he took the manly part and soothed her, and in the midst of all the havoc which the last twenty-four hours had made in his quiet, unreasoning nature, there glowed a warmth of feeling which made him almost comfortable for a few moments.

They waited impatiently for Eugene to come. Anne took charge of the house in her usual capable fashion, and Frederica found her putting the pictures back on the

Digitized by Google

walls in her own room. Later she went into Frederica's room and began to dust and clean in there. Frederica could not bear the sight of that and stayed in the study. It held a menace for her. She felt that she was going to be compelled to go back to that little room. And why not, she said grimly to herself, since she had proved that she was worthy only of such a room. If, when she had left that room, she had grown strong and had had courage, she would not now be forced to go back. Occasionally the thought of the house on the North Side came to her, and she wondered rather vaguely what the new cook would think of its desolation; whether she would leave the doors unlocked when she went home because there was no work to do.

Dr. Hartwell had sent Maggie into Freda's room to sleep, and then he came back to where Lange was lying, and put his hand on the man's brow. There was practically no fever, and that seemed the best sign.

Lange opened his eyes and tried weakly to sit up, but Dr. Hartwell forced him gently to his pillow again.

"Where is Maggie?" said Lange.

"I sent her in to sleep."

"Ask her to come here," said Lange, and the doctor, for fear that opposition might bring on fever, went in and found Maggie, not sleeping, but sitting dry-eyed and motionless by the window. She followed him back into the room.

"Maggie," said Lange, "are you ready now?"

She nodded.

He put out his hand and patted hers. "It has got to be within the law." Then he turned to the doctor. "Fix it up," he said. "Marry us."

The doctor looked after it, and that afternoon, although

Digitized by Google

Lange's fever had increased again, Dr. Hartwell married him to the little Irish girl.

The day passed very slowly for Frederica in spite of the fact that people were coming and going at the front door all day long. Old friends of Dr. Hartwell's came down in person to get him to leave what they felt was a desperate district. Newspaper reporters came to get his version of the disaster and of his arrest, for with the first light of day the police captain had realized that he had gone too far in molesting the citizen privileges of this minister of the gospel, and by some trick was now withdrawing the assertions which he had made the night before.

As for Harden, the man shook his head and implied that there was much more than he cared to tell. So the interviews with the doctor touched always upon the connection of Eugene Harden with the state of affairs in the city. And if Frederica had not been there at his side, he would often have said the wrong thing and brought suspicion more fully against his son-in-law.

There was not a moment during the day when Frederica was not listening for Eugene to come. He sent word at dusk to Dr. Hartwell not to worry; that he would be working until late that night, and that then he would go to the North Side house to see that everything was all right; that no doubt Freda was needed where she was.

And that night there was nothing for her to do but to go to her little room to sleep. Maggie was on the couch in the room where Lange was, Dr. Hartwell slept in the study, and Anne took turns with the nurse in watching the sick man. Freda had begged to be allowed to do this, but when it was refused her on the ground that she looked tired, she had not the courage to protest.

Digitized by Google

As she lay there, a hundred memories crept up beside her on the bed. She thought of Maggie as she used to hang over the back railing at the other house. She thought of Mrs. Schneider, who had not come near them all day, and whom they had not gone up to see, for Schneider had been among those who had been arrested. She thought of Mrs. Scanlan, and wondered whether her husband had gotten off; but interlaced with all these thoughts was the constantly recurring one of Eugene sleeping all alone in the other house. She lay perfectly still. Her eyes were wide open until toward dawn the exhaustion of the preceding day and night compelled her to sleep. It was no quiet sleep. She dreamed over and over again the same dream—that she was holding his hand, but that the hand was gloved; that she wanted to kiss it; that her eyes were too heavy to raise to his; but that her lips were burning, and finally in desperation she bit through the glove and kissed the white skin underneath, and then discovered that she had bitten the flesh. Each time when she would see the little drop of blood where her teeth had cut into that hand, she would wake up; and then the awful heaviness of the inevitable future oppressed her until again exhaustion made her sleep and let her dream the same dream.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII

FREDERICA'S EXULTATION

CHICAGO was stricken with panic. A bomb had been thrown. There was an anarchist conspiracy, a plot to destroy the city. With wild, unreasoned conclusions the press called for the suppression of all free speech and public meetings. Police, detectives, and newspaper reporters began to rush from place to place, hunting for evidence which might prove their story of a monster conspiracy. A police officer, enamored of his rôle of savior of the people, was the most excited of all; and because of what he was by nature it cannot be brought against him that under the necessity of maintaining his honors and position, he invented the only plot which ever had any connection with the Haymarket riots.

The vanity of one man in the police force was to result in the murder, by the State, of seven innocent men. But Chicago, like a hysterical woman, wanted the excitement which his vanity was ready to offer. He would have revealed himself involuntarily to any but a maddened mob. He had bits of shell and packages of dynamite hidden about the West Side, under sidewalks, in old houses, in the park, and then he would send his men to discover these evidences of a far-reaching conspiracy. The re-

Digitized by Google

porters of the various papers, whose week's wages depended upon their getting the most startling news possible, would hoodwink themselves and write exaggerated stories on false facts. And those who read the stories believed and gloated even while pretending to be stricken with terror. The instinct which makes man scratch his own healing wound is not so revolting as that which makes him revel in the excitement offered by catastrophe. Dignity goes down before the hunger for the sensational. A drab age of industrial routine which has kept animals craving by nature, variety and outlet, in the narrow rut of daily activity, is responsible.

Day after day the excitement in the city increased until it obscured every reason and clouded every sensibility. And seven men had been chosen as the victims on the altar of this appetite for revenge. Harden saw all this: to him were revealed the limitations of a fledgling democracy; and he wished that he had not come to America. Still he was free of illusions, and that was something. He would not be longer hampered by a trust and an ideal which were false. All the assertions he had ever made that he himself was an adventurer looking for excitement were laughable, as he recalled them. There was no excitement worthy of his spirit of adventure. Occasionally he realized that he should consider the personal experience which had come to him that afternoon of the night of disaster as a piece of great good luck. For had it not been for that he would have been the speaker at the Haymarket meeting, and then he would have been killed. But there was not so much comfort in that thought as there should have been, for life had become a nauseating thing. His days were a recurrence of activities without spirit, and his nights of empty loneliness in his own home.

Digitized by Google

Frederica had stayed at her father's house, caring for Lange, and Eugene had not suggested her return to their home. He came every day to discuss the conditions of the terror with Dr. Hartwell, and he was always very courteous, and made inquiries as to what he could do. Dr. Hartwell and Anne were having a sort of shy courtship, which made them feel most tenderly toward Frederica. They thought she had been noble in her willingness to stay and help take care of the sick man. Her father very soon forgot his moment of contempt for her that she had been distrustful of Eugene—for was she not married, after all? Neither he nor Anne had any idea of the breach between the two, and they always left them alone together for a few moments.

Those moments were the hardest for Frederica to face; for in them there was not even the chance for pretense—as there was when anyone was present. She talked of Lange, of the progress the State was making in the pursuit of the unknown who had thrown the bomb. She spoke in a hard, dry voice that sounded strange in her own ears—and she could not tell how it fell upon his, for he was absolutely without emotion. That was the most fearful thing for her to bear. If he had blamed her, if he had said one word so that she could explain something—anything to him—then she would have had some hope. But he was farther from her than he had been when they were strangers.

Sometimes Frederica felt that she was on the point of breaking through the silence, but she recognized that although it was a thing into which she might by an effort thrust herself, still she could not penetrate it; she could never come out on the other side. The silence was not his attempt at self-control, nor his protection; it was

Digitized by Google

his consciousness of being quite alone. She was not even visible to him; she no longer existed.

A week passed like this, and Freda kept up her part, gave no sign to anyone in the house that she was an outcast. She did not eat, but that was ascribed to the general excitement. No one knew that she did not sleep, that she walked for hours in her little room, until her knees would yield to exhaustion, and she would have to lie down. But not for long. The torment of lying quiet with her thoughts would urge her to rise again. In the early morning, as she would pass and repass her mirror, she saw how sick she looked; but by the time it was necessary to appear at breakfast, she found she could make herself look well; she had just enough fever to keep her eyes bright and to touch her cheeks with color. Eugene, on one of his short visits, told her that she was looking very well. "I suppose you get out into the air every day," he said. She made no answer.

But Anne touched her hand one night. "Freda," she exclaimed, "you're sick. We have been foolish to let you stay here. You must go home with Eugene to-morrow."

"Oh, no!" replied Frederica. "I—I should be too lonely."

However, she did go the next day, because there was no longer any excuse for staying where she was.

Lange was taken to jail, in spite of Mr. Flanagan's desire to protect him since he had married Maggie. More excitement was needed for purposes of the police, and the arrest was made. Lange took it almost indifferently, and seemed to infuse his own calm into Maggie, who made no scene, and began at once her daily pilgrimages to the North Side jail, where they took him. Eugene was not there at the time of the arrest; but he showed his first

Digitized by Google

emotion since the night of the disaster when he came and found Lange gone. They had never had much to say to each other, Harden apparently from indifference, and Lange from weakness and a sort of light abstraction, as though the game were not his own. There had been no outpouring of warmth on Harden's part when he realized that his father's blood was in this man. For all he knew his father might have other bitter sons of peasant mothers. Dr. Hartwell felt that it was a very delicate relationship which had been brought to light in his home, and he decided that it ought to be ignored. Anne did not even know it existed, for Alec was the only one likely to tell her, and he had not come back to the house, although he was working night and day for what he believed was justice—that is, for a moment of unblinded reason in the city, in which a man's voice might be raised and heard.

So Frederica packed her bag and got into the carriage with Eugene and drove home. His quiet was of indifference, hers of an effort not to show her feeling. It was as though she had not seen the house into whose silence she entered. Eugene opened the door, gave an order to the maid who was to take Maggie's place, and then saying he would be back for dinner, drove off, leaving her to go in alone.

Fire burned in every nerve fiber and cell as she went up to their room; and it was shame which was consuming her, not resentment nor passion. It was all very clear to her. If she had only been the sort of a girl that Maggie was! Maggie had not ever let the man she loved know that she loved him, when she had learned her lesson of the world's judgment of her position. She had not by a breath let anyone suspect Lange. And in her won-

Digitized by Google

derful pride she had not let Lange know that the child was coming. When her secret had been discovered by Mrs. Schneider she had fled from questions—and as she had wandered she had met him again and had gone to his rooms, because there was no other place for her that night. But she had not been there ten minutes when he, full of some thought which put him again outside of her world, had left her and told her not to let anyone in until his return. And out of her silence and her trust and obedience, however blind and unreasoning, had come her honor and his pride in her, his allegiance to her. For Frederica had marked the change in Lange's face whenever he looked at Maggie.

She had not been of the same stuff as the little Irish girl. From the very beginning she had talked. She felt now the shame of even having answered Alec when he first told her the story. How readily she had talked! And she ought to have looked at him without a word, until there had been nothing for him to do but to leave her.

And then she had talked to Lange, had admitted to him her distrust, had appealed to the very man who was responsible for the rumor! Whenever she thought of that she shut her eyes in a sort of frenzy and self-disgust.

And worst of all! She had talked to her father. That was when she had admitted in words that she knew herself. The recollection of her father's anger gave her some comfort.

Why had she been weak? What was it in her that had yielded so quickly to the first onslaught? Was she by nature suspicious or disloyal? There was no explanation, no chance for her to excuse herself. She had been weak, and now she was paying the penalty. Penalty! The moment the word swept across Frederica's mind as she

Digitized by Google

sat there rigid in her self-examination, she took a breath of relief. For was there not always an end to a penalty? It was not indefinite and eternal—or was it? Would he ever love her again? She wanted to believe so, but she had to admit that it could never be again as it had been, for she had proved herself quite different from what he had thought her. If he ever cared for her again, it would be as some one else.

Her mind had been so taken up with the idea that she had lost him, that this was the first time she had thought how he had lost her. And for the first time in all those days the tears came. Eugene Harden, through her weakness, had lost something which had been beautiful and dear to him. At last she had forgotten herself and was thinking of him.

The tears were still in her eyes when Anne and her father were announced. It seemed a pity to Frederica that even in her own house she should have to begin to pretend again, but she washed her face in cold water and went down.

Anne came toward her quickly. "Freda, we came at once to tell you. It is like a confession. Your father and I——"

"I know," said Freda, wishing to spare Anne the embarrassment which was choking her.

"No, my child," said Dr. Hartwell, most seriously, "you don't know all. We have just been married."

Before Frederica could express surprise Anne hurried to explain. "Of course it would have been more conventional to have waited, but I wanted to stay with your father."

Dr. Hartwell interrupted. "Anne is most generous. She wants to devote her money to save those men who are

Digitized by Google

on trial, and she thought it wiser that I should have authority—to carry out her wishes. Where is Eugene?"

Frederica said that he had gone to Lange.

"We are going to my father at once," said Anne—and they left.

Freda was relieved that her father should find this solution for his loneliness, and she hoped that Alexander Sloane would hear of it at once. Then she returned to her own thoughts, but the interruption had given her a chance to regain her poise. She had felt old and reserved with these two people she loved, and that showed her that she had changed. Suddenly she stopped in the middle of the room and looked fixedly at the floor; but she felt as though she were standing upon a mountain peak and looking down upon herself and Eugene, upon her father and Anne, upon Lange and Maggie. Instead of her thoughts going around and around, so close to the objects that the objects were blurred, she found herself circling at a distance, getting a bird's-eye view. And when she looked up from the spot in the rug which had held her gaze, her face had regained much of its wonted calm. She took a deep breath and sat down comfortably in the big library chair and began again to study the carpet. For a long time she sat there thinking until the new housemaid came in with a message from the cook that the roast had come too late to be prepared for that night at six.

"Dinner will not be served until seven," said Frederica, with a sense of giving her first word of command. But as soon as the girl had left the room, Frederica seized her hat and coat with little regard for dignity, and dashed out of the house and down the street. She might be changed, but she was quite as impetuous as ever in her motions.

Digitized by Google

At a little after six Eugene Harden put his latchkey into the door and crossed the threshold without any awakening anticipation in his face. It would be an ordeal, this first dinner at home. He had put it off as long as he could, and had eaten alone for a week, but there was no longer any excuse for not beginning their life together. The house was very quiet, and it occurred to him that Frederica might not be there. For the first time since the night of her self-revelation he bethought himself of her feelings, of what she might have suffered. But his second thought was that he could not help it if she had suffered. Doubtless it was her vanity, her pride, which had been injured, just as it had been her conventional sense of marriage which had suffered through her distrust of him. Yet he felt a certain suspense as he stood there in the hall, and it surprised him. Suppose that, unwilling to face the situation, afraid to stay and confess her weakness, she had gone. Then she was a coward, too! And the surprise yielded to his former hardness as he went into the library.

She had not gone, neither had she heard him come in, and she was standing under the light looking at a photograph, so intent that he stood a long moment watching her. The gown she wore was one he had never seen. It was thin gray over gray that glistened, like mist over shining water; it clung to her like something full of life and feeling. She had braided her hair and brought it up about her small round head in the old Dutch fashion; little strands escaped over her eyes and on the nape of her neck, but it was wonderfully smooth for Frederica. Eugene could not help but notice that the shadows under her eyes made her face all the more delicate in color and contour. Then he noticed the change in the room. The

Digitized by Google

furniture was all rearranged—to better advantage—he admitted on the instant, and there were spring flowers (rather costly spring flowers from hothouses) everywhere that flowers could be put; they caught a warmth of color from the firelight. He was glad of the open fire, for the day had been gray and cold for a May day.

Before these impressions had gone deeper than his outermost sensibility she laid the photograph face upward on the table and looked around. What were to be the words for this beginning, and what was the meaning of what he saw? One of the passwords of civilization came to him as an inspiration. "Good evening," he said, and came toward her formally.

Frederica clasped her hands behind her and stood very straight and unsmiling.

"I am Frederica Hartwell," she said, using the same words she had first spoken to him on the back porch months before.

"Yes?" He looked at her in surprise.

"You are sure you understand?" she asked.

He bent his head in a questioning look at her.

She answered it. "You have been thinking that you were mistaken in me, but it was *your* mistake."

Light did not dawn in his eyes, as she had hoped, so she began again.

"You must try and understand. I am Frederica Hartwell; I am not yet a year older than when I met you. And when I met you I—I did not know very much—nothing at all except through my eyes, and not all I could have learned through them."

She paused in such a way that he knew she was going on.

"You began to teach me right away," she continued. "I suppose you can't understand how you confused me at

Digitized by Google

first, how I had to work hard when I was by myself to find out what you meant when I was with you. You taught me a great deal and I learned pretty well until—until that evening I came to you——"

Eugene made a gesture of disapproval.

"I know," she said quickly, "I know it isn't pleasant for you to think of those things, but you *must*." She spoke intensely. "You've *got* to be fair, for your own sake." Then she regained her even voice as though she were speaking as much to herself as to him. "That evening I tried to learn too much on top of what I had learned that day—about Maggie, and Alec, and the meeting, and my father's being owned by Mr. Sloane. You remember. I learned that you loved me, and that you were not free, and that the world was suspicious of such—of such innocent things like my coming to your room. And you see they came, my father and Mr. Sloane, before I had gotten all those things through my head. I am *not* excusing myself," she said, interrupting her own narrative, "I am only trying to make you understand. You cannot be expected to realize what a—what a simpleton I was. And I lied, Eugene!"

She stopped and breathed deep, but did not move, for she had not finished.

"That was the strange thing—I thought a lie would help you. It did not seem wicked. It doesn't feel wicked now—I don't know why it doesn't, but it seems dangerous." For a moment her thought paused on what she had said, and then she lifted her head. "So you must see, Eugene, that the next night when I did suspect you of telling a lie to me because you were sorry, can't you see that I was still confused, and it did not seem wicked to me—or dishonorable or—or anything that you seem to think it is?"

Digitized by Google

Eugene made no answer. She could not tell whether he was understanding what she was saying. Her eyes fell on his hand as it lay on the edge of the mantel, and she clenched her own hands behind her and bit her lips; she wanted so much to go to him and kiss his hand. Instead, she raised her eyes to his again.

"And afterwards, after we were married, I had a great deal to learn that I had not even dreamed. It was beautiful, but it was confusing. It wasn't anything I could reason about or talk about, or even whisper to you about. I was learning myself, and learning how wonderful it was to be your wife, to be a woman." Again she paused. "You knew all those things before—I just came into your life without shaking it, and so you never guessed that everything in life was being reflected in me as in a stirred pool of water. I don't think you can ever know. A man can't. That's the reason why I believed so easily when I heard the story. I lost my wits. I ought not to have said a word to anyone, I ought to have come to you. But it was that lie I told that kept making me believe you could tell one too—and I was afraid if you had, you would not want me to know."

She waited for him to say something, but he was looking at the fire.

"That's all," she said; "I have been a fool."

Eugene started at the word on her lips.

"I have been everything cowardly and dreadful, but I don't see how I could help it, just because I *am* Frederica Hartwell—not somebody who had learned through all sorts of experiences." She bent toward him a little. "You wouldn't have—have liked me if I had been experienced, so why are you so hard?"

It was her first appeal to him and he seemed untouched.

Digitized by Google

She saw no sign of understanding or yielding in him. A gleam of amazement shone in her eyes, and then a quiet sort of anger. She pressed her lips together and waited.

"I don't think it is a thing we can talk about, Frederica," he said finally.

She folded her arms in front of her and came toward him a step. "Perhaps not! You like to be silent, to be hard, to be merciless. You think it is noble and dignified. If anybody explained anything to you that you didn't already know, you would refuse to understand. You are so—so conceited! You can be silent if you want to, but I shall talk all I wish to. There is dignity in silence, but perhaps I am not meant to be dignified, perhaps it is not natural for me to go about with my lips pressed together and a great ideal of myself in my own head. And if it isn't natural to be silent, then it's playing a part to try to be—it would be theatrical and not honest. But you!"—her voice swelled with contempt—"you must suffer in silence and boast to yourself that you are lonely, and there is no one you can trust. If most men tell about where they come from and what they think and why they have come to think that way, why shouldn't you? Why are you so great that you must have no questions asked you? I've learned that, too—that your reserve was bound to make me confused, make me blunder in some way. When you said you weren't free, that you were married, I was so simple that I never even thought what that meant. If you had said you had two wives, it wouldn't have meant anything to me. I wouldn't have questioned you, and you would have thought just as I suppose you did think, that you had found some one who was not curious, who respected your dignity, your privilege of keeping everything to yourself. But, Eugene,

Digitized by Google

when I touched you, when I learned what my body was—I—I began to think, and to ask questions to myself, and sooner or later I should have blundered in some way and have asked you. But at first I was afraid, I felt your pride—your conceit, and so I helped you to your silence, just as I would try to pretend I hadn't seen a scar on your body if I had thought you did not want it seen.

"And when you looked at me the other night I was overcome with shame; I can't tell you just why now; but it was that shame which has taught me this. I have been alone with it for a week. I have cried out to you by myself to forgive me, and I have just been crawling around on my knees to you and feeling I would do anything—anything to get you to trust me again, to get you to understand. To-day in this room I had to say to myself that I would have to live on here and eat your bread and take your shelter, and I felt that was part of the penalty. And then quite suddenly I saw what nonsense it all was, how you were condemning me for learning things which I would have to learn just in this way to be your equal. You learned. You wouldn't want to tell me *how* you learned many things. I know that. I don't want to know. What you are, you are because you have been through all sorts of experiences. And what I am, I am because of my experiences. I am Frederica Hartwell—and I am glad! I am glad!" Everything left her voice except exultation. "You have taught me so many things! You have taught me what a woman is, what a man is, what a lie is, what trust is not, what loneliness is, what passion is. You gave me my eyes for the world about me. You gave me my body, and now you have given me pride and myself—myself!"

Before he had moved, and she had not been looking

Digitized by Google

at him while she spoke, but at a great jar of jonquils on the table, the door bell rang. It came into Frederica's exultation.

"Listen," she said, "there is the world entering upon us again. And I shall not lie!"

She went smiling toward the door and kissed her father as he came in.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV

THE WORLD ENTERS AGAIN

"THIS is a surprise for you, Eugene," said Frederica, but without looking at him; "my father and Anne have come for their wedding dinner." Harden was surprised, collected himself quickly, and was most cordial. Whatever he might have been feeling while Frederica was talking to him, could not come to the surface, and now his pride would necessarily indicate that he must be hospitable and not let these two members of the family recognize the breach which existed between him and the girl in gray moving about the rooms, calling Anne's attention to the flowers, to the way she had arranged things, and to her own gown.

"But I have never seen that before," said Anne, touching the filmy gray.

"No," said Frederica, "I bought that this afternoon. I went downtown on purpose."

Eugene overheard and looked at her in a nonplused sort of way, but she never glanced at him.

"Who is this?" asked Anne, picking up the photograph which Freda had laid down when Eugene came in.

Eugene glanced at it. "That is my brother's wife," he said. "She is not so beautiful as that now, but she is a very intellectual woman and fine."

Digitized by Google

Frederica took a deep breath of comfort. How absurd her hatred of that face had been!

Dinner was served almost immediately, and the table was decorated with as great a profusion of flowers as the library. The cook, whose natural sociability had been so terribly shocked by the former meals eaten in that house, was glad to be allowed at last any sort of a dinner which could be served to more than one.

Dr. Hartwell was occasionally so abstracted that they laughed at him. His mind was in a whirl. Here he was married; here was Anne sitting across from him. She began to seem a very different sort of person from that Anne whom he had always known. Here was his daughter, a married woman, too, and in a gown which even to his eyes, unaccustomed as they were to fashion, proved itself a marvel of beauty; and he knew it must have cost a great deal of money. His mind, freed from its usual restraint of abstract spirituality and strict private economy, was fairly reveling in the sense of luxury and ease in which he found himself. He computed roughly that the flowers on the dining table must have cost fifteen or twenty dollars, and he was rather pained when he discovered that he had not been translating that twenty dollars into food for the poor or clothes for the little Flanagans. Could it be, he asked himself, that already he was yielding so quickly to the things of the flesh?

But these moments of inner self-examination were interrupted by the pleasures of the palate, and it meant so much to him, too, that Frederica should be sitting near him again at table.

By common consent they kept away from the topic which had come to absorb them so much these last days.

Digitized by Google

While they were eating they said nothing at all of the catastrophe and of all those things which were now hanging in the balance. But when they had gone back to the library, and Frederica, at Eugene's suggestion, was having the coffee served there, they fell into a discussion of what was likely to happen. Dr. Hartwell, leaning back in a big leather chair, smoked the first cigar that he had smoked for fifteen years, and he could hardly keep from confiding to Anne that it meant a good deal to him that he should be doing it.

Frederica felt for a few moments a little return of constraint, but she threw it off, and no one could have guessed that she was watching Eugene with eyes greedy for some sign of whether or not he had heard the words she had said to him before dinner. Would he believe in her? Had he been able to see in what she had told him what she herself had seen in the moment when she had stood gazing on the carpet in this same room? She felt as if she had recovered herself, as if she had regained her balance; and the very relief from the strain of the week made her gayer than usual. Once it occurred to her that Eugene might think this gayety was flippant, might think that because she was capable of laughter, and even of a certain tenderness toward him without waiting for any response from him, that she was without real emotion; that she had lost already the significance of what she had been through. But even as that fact came to her another followed; and that was that if he was going to go through life judging her by the syllables of laughter or by her tears, instead of by his instincts, and by his own fair judgment, why, she might just as well give up now as any time. She was conscious during the evening of a desire to tantalize him, to make love in a little, al-

Digitized by Google

most childish way, to appeal to him through his senses, just as before dinner she had tried to make the honest, direct appeal to his reason.

The talk between her father and Harden concerned itself first of all with Lange. His words to Flanagan, when he had said, "Why should not I be the one that threw that bomb?" had been repeated by the Irishman in the first rush of his bitterness to a fellow policeman who was a friend of the police captain; and now these words were coming back on Lange's head.

Harden was loath to admit to Dr. Hartwell that he was carrying on this work now in behalf of the men in an almost listless fashion, because his life had gone out of him when he had discovered the real American spirit. So he followed the doctor's arguments in favor of Lange with as much interest as he could summon, and little by little he found himself warming, and the old desire to enter into the game and to beat his opponent returned upon him. He began to walk up and down the floor. "The only way we can serve these men," he said, "is to discover the man who did the deed."

"Lange can prove an alibi," said Dr. Hartwell.

"How?" asked Frederica, who remembered that Maggie had told her that he had left her after she had been in his room for ten minutes.

"He was at his rooms," said Dr. Hartwell. "Maggie says that he did not go out until he heard the explosion."

Frederica contracted with the thought that perhaps Maggie had lied. And Harden, who understood these things better, said that he doubted that Maggie's word would have any weight because of her relation to him.

"It is wonderful," said Anne, "how that little young thing held her tongue all these months when, if she had

Digitized by Google

come to us at any time, we could have made him marry her. Think what she must have suffered, Freda!"

Freda flushed. "I have been admiring Maggie, too," she said. "But after all it is because she has not got so much imagination. She was not thinking ahead through long years. She just had a few facts in her brain, and they were very simple. So I don't think that it was so remarkable. If she had been used all her life to seeing things in her own mind, and seeing them as pictures, she could not have kept still. She would have broken down." Frederica got up and walked over to the fireplace, more because the thoughts within her needed motion of body while she expressed them. "I think a great many virtues are in people just because vices have not been developed yet. I think a great many things like honesty and morality just come because men and women have not imaginations. And you have got to go through a long stretch of imagination, and you have got to know just how big a fight it is not to let the things you see in your mind affect the things that you are going to do before you can get back those virtues again. Then you know how to hold your tongue; and then you know what it is to be honest."

"Why, Freda," said her father, "you are saying that as well as I could myself."

She turned on him quickly. "But you know perfectly well," she said, "you never thought of it. I never thought of it until to-day."

Anne laughed. "You have had a very busy day, Freda—what with buying that dress and getting up this dinner, and making a philosophy for yourself."

"Yes," said Frederica with a little sigh, "I *am* tired." Then she seated herself again. She did not dare look toward Eugene, for she had been quite unconscious of him

Digitized by Google

while she was giving utterance to her resentment against her own admiration for Maggie—for that is what it amounted to. Whether or not she was right in her conclusions about Maggie's reticence, was a matter of small importance to anyone.

When they came to discuss Mr. Schneider, it was not so simple a question. He was undoubtedly a man who could be accused of the most radical socialist position. He had for years been the leader of an organization which had met more or less privately to discuss economic questions of the age. He stood abreast in thought with all the economic leaders of Europe. And that was so far ahead of any economic thought in America that he was now to pay a heavy price for a pioneer position. The fact of his leadership could be used against him; the fact that he had used the word "revolution"; that he had said that some day the poor man might come to take dynamite as a weapon—this would be used against him, too. In the German newspaper were many columns of his in which he had put forcibly and fearlessly the principles which he was advocating. Now he, too, like Lange, was in jail, and with all the public opinion stirred against those things for which he stood, believing that if a man said "dynamite" he was capable of using it, it would be very hard to expect leniency or even justice for him.

They were deep in a consideration of the best methods to be employed in behalf of him, when the bell rang and the maid brought Alec Sloane into the room. He made no apology for coming uninvited. He had been Harden's right-hand man for eight days now. It was generally understood that if anything of importance occurred while Harden was away from the office, that he was to come and inform him. His whole manner now was that of the

Digitized by Google

bearer of ill tidings, and the tidings concerned more than one.

"I don't know that I ought to have come," he said; "but I thought some one ought to go to Maggie at once. She knows, but she ought not to be alone."

They had all risen to their feet as though drawn suddenly to motion by the look in his eyes.

"Lange used dynamite to kill himself."

A shudder went through the four people who heard him. Each one had his thoughts. Frederica knowing what the love of woman for man is, thought of Maggie. Harden thought of Lange as his brother. Dr. Hartwell was wondering if that meant Lange was guilty. Anne's thought found an expression first.

"How could he get dynamite?" she said.

"I think Maggie gave it to him," Alec said. "She won't say a word."

Harden was pacing the floor. All the blood which had been common between him and Gustav Lange was surging in his veins. All his own egotism in these last few days, when he might have gone to this man and made up in some way for the years of bitterness and of conscious illegitimacy, flooded him with self-disgust. It was just as Frederica had said—his pride was contemptible. The others in the room felt what he must be going through, and they stood silent.

Then Anne said that she must go at once to Maggie, and with tenderness and emotion she and Dr. Hartwell parted from Frederica, not even deploring in their own minds the fact that their first evening of comfort had been disturbed. They began on this, the night of their wedding, to serve others, and with a joy which neither one of them had ever experienced in trying to serve alone.

Digitized by Google

Alec came further into the room and nerved himself a second time. "I have come to ask you what I ought to do," he said. "I believe—I can't keep from believing that my father knows something as to who planned the throwing of the bomb."

Harden stopped where he was and gave Alec a look which passed for a clasp of the hand.

"I have come to ask you if you think I should say this to the authorities."

Harden came forward. "Alec," he said, "these are your own ideas, are they not? You have no proof, have you —no evidence?"

Alec looked at him a long moment. "No proof under the law," he said; "only the look in my father's eyes; only the knowledge that he has neither slept nor eaten; that he is losing his mind."

Frederica watched Eugene while she waited for the answer. To her the tragedy of it was so plain—the son who knew his father guilty, and who knew that the lives of innocent men hung upon the acknowledgment of that guilt, yet who had all of the strong race feeling of a son for a father. And while she waited for Eugene to speak —and he was silent for some time—she knew deep in her heart that whatever he said, Alec would do, and she would believe right. For although before dinner she had spoken a great measure of disdain for what she felt was his weakness, she knew, too, that under that weakness lay an immense strength.

Harden put his hand on Alec's arm. "You are judging your father by his own actions; and it may be that you are judging wrongly. He may have dropped some word which he realizes now was taken as an order to break up that meeting. He may have ordered that meeting dis-

Digitized by Google

persed; but it is impossible to believe that he gave any command of any sort which had dynamite in it. All of your father's training, even in corrupt commercialism, could not be an explanation for such a thing as that. The thing that he is fighting in his soul may be the thing that you are fighting in your soul, and that I am fighting in mine, and that Frederica has won over in hers—a knowledge of his own strength of impulse, which is also a knowledge of weakness. Lange made more use of your father than your father made of him. And so it may be with this unknown man who threw the bomb. He may have made use of some hint or suggestion to his own embittered, misshapen end." Suddenly Eugene straightened. "Lange was innocent of that," he said. "Lange was my brother."

Alec sat down, and leaning his head on the table, burst into sobs that shook him for a long time. Frederica went over and stood near him and put her hand on his head; but neither she nor Eugene spoke to him, for what he was passing through could not be touched by words.

When Alec had recovered himself, Eugene talked a long time to him in a rather impersonal way about motives and consequences, and how in remorse a man might see clearly the very small beginning of a great disaster, and feel that he was responsible for all of the fearful havoc, because he was conscious of having overlooked responsibility in the beginning.

"If I were you, Alec," he said, "I would go home and watch for that moment when your father's silence breaks down; when he has told you what is in his mind, then it rests with you to make him do what is right. But from the moment that he confides in you, you will no longer be able to speak of it to anyone else. If he is guilty under

Digitized by Google

the law you will see that he pays the penalty under the law. But if, as I think probable, his mind is full of these tremendous consequences of some business judgment, of something in his own affairs, then you can help him to expiate what he feels his sin by getting him to stand in behalf of Schneider and the others. He may be the means yet of saving these lives."

Alec was strengthened as much by the calmness of Harden's voice and the touch of Frederica's hand on his arm as he was by the words themselves; and he left them and went back to his home.

Eugene and Frederica were alone. The world had entered upon them; and it had brought them both back to themselves as parts of it. It would have been impossible now for either one to take up what had been said before the others came. If Frederica had had any desire to express exultation in having found herself, there was the thought of Maggie. And if Harden had had any wish to explain his privilege of reserve, to claim a superior position, there was Lange. They sat for a long time looking at the fire, and the house was very quiet. And then Frederica went over and kneeled down by Eugene and kissed his hand.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV

THE DAY OF THE LAW

THAT day in November arrived which had been set for the hanging of seven men by the State. All the traditions of justice and all the forms of law had been put to one side, and the mystery of the people's vengeance was to be enacted within gray stone walls at twelve o'clock. The light of the November morning was dimmed by the rain which fell everywhere, but did not prevent great crowds of curious people from moving toward one place on the North Side.

At the corner of a street on which the jail was located, the carriage stopped. The mass of human beings who stood there in the rain would not permit its going farther; and Freda, in spite of a delaying hand on her arm, stepped out of the carriage, Eugene following, and they walked to where they could see the walls which hid the mystery.

There in the rain stood thousands and thousands of human beings, and underneath the awed look of most of them was a certain kind of joy—the joy of the human animal in catastrophe. Here was something big, something unusual, something fearful going on not far from them.

Ropes were fastened in such a way as to keep the throng from coming too near the jail, and on the roofs of the great building were kneeling the sharpshooters of the State

Digitized by Google

with their rifles pointed toward the mob, as though they expected that something would burst forth from this animal excitement and menace the completion of the act of vengeance within. And for blocks around the jail were scattered all the police of the city—those very men whose approach upon the meeting held by the citizens of the city had been the beginning of this which was taking place inside.

Frederica and Eugene stood there in the rain and watched the human beings, expectant, watched the police, and now and then looked up at the sharpshooters. And there was nothing to be said. There was no word to express what they saw.

A few yards from them another carriage stopped, and Alec Sloane with his father got out. The older man was now an old man. He seemed shrunken and collapsed. Neither of them saw Eugene or Frederica, but went as near as possible to the ropes and stood with heads uncovered, with eyes intent upon the walls of the jail.

Alec stood straight, and with a certain pride, for his father was not guilty of that which he had suspected him. His father's remorse had sprung from the suspicion that he was responsible, for rumor pointed more and more to John Scanlan as the man that had thrown the bomb. And Sloane knew now that Scanlan's bitterness, that the fire which had been set in the lumber yards, that the bomb which had been thrown, if it were thrown by him, were the fruits of his own act—that of blacklisting Scanlan fifteen years before, depriving him not only of his day's wages, but of his child.

Sloane, in the torture of a vision in which he had learned these things, had had revealed to him the intricacies of consequence, and he had gone to Mrs. Scanlan and

Digitized by Google

begged her to find out where her husband was that he might know positively if the man had fled from justice for this greater deed or merely from fear of the penalty which he must pay for setting the fire. But Mrs. Scanlan had not known where her husband was. There in that house beside the long fence of the lumber yard Scanlan had seen the boy, and the boy had stopped watching his mother for a few minutes to look at this man, the first of his kind that had ever crossed their threshold.

Besides this inner torment of Sloane's, there had been his own failure in business. He had not destroyed the union, for by the efforts of Harden during these six months the union had stood as one man, had kept it intact, and had beaten Sloane in the fight, for which Sloane had had no longer any heart. But those men who had had the "gentleman's" agreement with him had destroyed his business; and although he had come to-day in his carriage, on the morrow he would be declared bankrupt, and would know himself depending again, as in his early youth, upon his own efforts, except that now he had Alec to help him. He had spent great sums in behalf of these men who were about to be hanged within the walls opposite. Alec knew that his father might have saved that money for his own use, but the boy was glad that it had gone.

Eugene noticed that Frederica had become very pale, and he touched her hand. "We have paid what honor we could," he said. "Now let us go back."

And she, overpowered with what was incomprehensible, turned and followed him back to the carriage. On the way they saw Mr. and Mrs. Schneider standing there in the rain with the others; and the look on Schneider's face, who had been close to this death within, but had

Digitized by Google

escaped almost by a miracle, was the look of a man who had no longer any faith in the righteousness of democracy and the principles of freedom.

The same gray light of the November morning shone into the eyes of Maggie's baby, and Frederica leaned over him to see if he would smile—sometimes he did. But this morning there was nothing in Frederica's face to call out a smile, and so he lay quite motionless and looked up at her, as she looked down. This was a day for thoughts to reach down to the very beginning of things, and to be held by the unanswerable mystery of all beginnings. Frederica was asking this little creature, that lay there so contentedly, what its inheritance was. There might never be any answer. She knew that, and the rebellion within her against all the secrets which make up the future, stirred her as though she had not been fighting all these six months for faith and patience.

"Ah, baby!" she said; and the protest in her voice reached Eugene's ears; but he did not understand it. He had come into this room, which for half a year had been given up to Maggie, to hand Frederica a letter which had just come. He stopped at the door and watched Freda as she leaned over the child. For him there was mystery, too, in this devotional attitude of the woman before the child. He had seen it in Maggie and understood that she was giving to this baby all that she had wanted to give to its father. He had wondered somewhat that this Irish girl, whose youth had been interrupted by a storm of vengeance and passion with which it was almost impossible to imagine her connected, should be now so quiet, so much like another being. It seemed to disprove all the theories of race inheritance. Maggie's reticence and reserve, the silence in which she had locked

Digitized by Google

her knowledge of Lange's death, had made her a woman of refinement, and never for a moment did Eugene or Frederica question the hold that she had upon them; not as a dependent, not as one who had suffered indirectly through them, but as a friend. And so the child was likely to have any evil in its inheritance offset by the home to which it had come.

But Frederica's devotion was something that a man could not understand. It was not that of the woman for the child, but it was that of a woman weighed down by a sense of the incomprehensible things in life. In spite of Frederica's gayety on the evening when she had come to a sense of herself and of her own pride, and had spoken to Eugene, she had never been quite the same since then. There was always this undertone of questioning. After a while, perhaps, she would get so used to the question, so used to the fact, to the only positive fact in life—that men know nothing of themselves nor of their associates—that she would regain the girlish, care-free manner.

Eugene did not analyze this change in her, because it was impossible for him to know what she had been through. Now he stood watching her, and from the depths of his being came a sense of her presence which he had never felt before. It was as though a flame had sprung from her to him, and as though their two bodies had been fused by the heat of it. She felt it, too; looked up at him and forgot the child; but stood quite motionless with her head lifted. Each one was conscious that this was the moment of marriage, and it had sprung from the unknown at an unexpected moment of a gray November morning.

He came over and handed her the letter, his hand shaking. And then he bent over the child to hide his emotion, for speech was not to enter into this moment.

Digitized by Google

Frederica took the letter and sat down at the window. She recognized Alec Sloane's handwriting, and she wondered at the thickness of what she was about to open. Inside there was but a brief note from him to her, saying that he had found this among his father's papers, and he thought that she might want to have it. Then, while Eugene stood there and watched the eyes of the baby, Frederica read the story of his life before he came to this country. It was told very briefly, in a sort of legal way which had no reverence for all of the significance that lay in the facts themselves. But being told in this way it allowed her to read without danger of emotion; and when she had finished she sat looking at the letter, and it seemed as if she had always known what she had just read. The story was unusual, but very simple.

Eugene Harden had a brother who was in the Austrian army. The brother was married, but afterwards he had made love to a girl whose family was very prominent in Vienna. When as a result of what for him had been a gay flirtation, the girl threatened to destroy his position in the army, to drag the Harden name into notoriety, because she was to pay the heavy consequence of motherhood, Eugene had come forward and had married her. Only her family and his had known the real state of affairs. His idealism had made it somewhat easier for him to do this, because he was not in love with anyone else; he had intense family pride, and he loved his brother. But at the very threshold of his life with the woman, he had learned that he could not cross over; that she was so unworthy of even what he had done that he could not hide it from himself. He had never lived with her. There had been a pretense kept up for some months, and then her natural wildness had been shown in other ways, and

Digitized by Google

she had after all dragged the family name into the mouths of all the gossips of Vienna.

The idealism of the younger brother had not served for long. For two years he had made every attempt he could to be conventional; but at the end of that time he had sought for a divorce, and had determined to come to this country. For months the legal questions of the divorce dragged along, and because of the Austrian law, and of the Austrian church, it began to seem impossible for him to obtain one. He had come to this country then in a sort of desperation, for although he might be bound to this woman under the law, he would not stay where he would be likely to see her or those things which reminded him of his bondage. He had left her at his country place in Hungary. Then his lawyer had worked as hard as ever, and had finally brought the thing to pass which he desired, and had cabled Eugene. This letter which Frederica was reading had followed almost immediately from the representative of Sloane at Vienna, and had contradicted the facts which Sloane had received in a preceding letter from him.

It seemed to Frederica that she had known these things. And then she realized that in these months which had followed the days of her distrust she had come to learn from the depths of herself the bigness, the generosity, the idealism of Eugene. She did not need the facts of this story to prove anything.

He was still standing by the child when she finished reading. She had no impulse to go to him and tell him of this letter. There was but one thing for her to do, and that was to make him forget what he had lived through, for though the facts were few, she saw now where he had learned that which had made him what he was.

Digitized by Google

She put the letter on the window sill, went over to him, slipped her hand into his, which were clasped behind his back, and put her cheek against his shoulder. And again there was the great surging warmth of life which swept through every cell in her body and swept through every nerve in his.

(1)

THE END

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE LEADING NOVEL OF TODAY.

The Fighting Chance.

By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS. Illustrated by A. B. Wenzell. 12mo. Ornamental Cloth, $1.50.

In "The Fighting Chance" Mr. Chambers has taken for his hero, a young fellow who has inherited with his wealth a craving for liquor. The heroine has inherited a certain rebelliousness and dangerous caprice. The two, meeting on the brink of ruin, fight out their battles, two weaknesses joined with love to make a strength. It is refreshing to find a story about the rich in which all the women are not sawdust at heart, nor all the men satyrs. The rich have their longings, their ideals, their regrets, as well as the poor; they have their struggles and inherited evils to combat. It is a big subject, painted with a big brush and a big heart.

"After 'The House of Mirth' a New York society novel has to be very good not to suffer fearfully by comparison. 'The Fighting Chance' is very good and it does not suffer."—*Cleveland Plain Dealer.*

"There is no more adorable person in recent fiction than Sylvia Landis."—*New York Evening Sun.*

"Drawn with a master hand."—*Toledo Blade.*

"An absorbing tale which claims the reader's interest to the end."—*Detroit Free Press.*

"Mr. Chambers has written many brilliant stories, but this is his masterpiece."—*Pittsburg Chronicle Telegraph.*

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

Digitized by Google

A MASTERPIECE OF FICTION.

The Guarded Flame.

By W. B. MAXWELL, Author of "Vivien."
Cloth, $1.50.

"'The Guarded Flame, by W. B. Maxwell, is a book to challenge the attention of the reading public as a remarkable study of moral law and its infraction. Mr. Maxwell is the son of Miss M. E. Braddon (Mrs. John Maxwell), whose novels were famous a generation ago, and his first book 'Vivien' made the English critics herald him as a new force in the world of letters. 'The Guarded Flame' is an even more astonishing production, a big book that takes rank with the most important fiction of the year. It is not a book for those who read to be amused or to be entertained. It touches the deepest issues of life and death."
—*Albany Argus.*

"The most powerfully written book of the year."
—*The Independent.*

"'The Guarded Flame' is receiving high praise from the critics everywhere."—*Chicago Record-Herald.*

"This is a book which cannot fail to make its mark."
—*Detroit News.*

"Great novels are few and the appearance of one at any period must give the early reviewer a thrill of discovery. Such a one has come unheralded; but from a source whence it might have been confidently expected. The author is W. B. Maxwell, son of the voluminous novelist known to the world as Miss Braddon. His novel is entitled 'The Guarded Flame.'"—*Philadelphia Press.*

"The books of W. B. Maxwell are essentially for thinkers."—*St. Louis Post-Dispatch.*

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

Digitized by Google

BY LLOYD OSBOURNE.

Three Speeds Forward.

Uniquely illustrated with full-page illustrations, head and tail pieces and many sketches by Karl Anderson and H. D. Williams. Ornamental Cloth, $1.00.

"'Three Speeds Forward' is an amusing automobile story by Lloyd Osbourne, in which the ostensible teller of what happened is the girl heroine. A little runabout is the important factor in the love romance. The book is prettily bound and printed and is illustrated."—*Toledo Blade.*

"'Three Speeds Forward,' by Lloyd Osbourne, is a very brief and most agreeable novelette dealing with modern society and the chug-chug wagon."—*Philadelphia Inquirer.*

"The climax of this story is original and most humorous. The action is rapid and consistent with the subject in hand. Altogether it is a most enjoyable little volume, well illustrated and attractively bound."
—*Milwaukee Sentinel.*

"It is a bright and sprightly little story, very strongly flavored with gasoline, but quite readable. It is attractively and characteristically illustrated."—*New York Times.*

Wild Justice.

Illustrated. Ornamental Cloth, $1.50.

"Lloyd Osbourne's stories of the South Sea Islands are second only to Stevenson's on the same theme. 'Wild Justice' is a volume of these short stories, beginning with that strong and haunting tale, 'The Renegade.' These are stories which will bear reading more than once. They have an atmosphere that it is restful to breathe, once in a while, to the dwellers in cities and the toilers of these Northern lands where life is such a stern affair."—*Denver Post.*

"Mr. Lloyd Osbourne's nine stories of the South Sea Islands ('Wild Justice') are told with a Kiplingesque vigor, and well illustrate their title. All are eminently readable—not overweighted with tragedy, as is the wont of tales that deal with the remote regions of the earth."
—*New York Times.*

"Mr. Osbourne in 'Wild Justice' has given us a series of stories about the Samoan Islands and their islanders and their white invaders, visitors and conquerors which are vivid with humor and pathos."
—*New York Herald.*

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

Digitized by Google

TWO CHARMING STORIES.

The Little King of Angel's Landing.

By ELMORE ELLIOTT PEAKE. Illustrated. Cloth, $1.25.

This is a story of a plucky little cripple of indomitable energy and perseverance. How, boy-like, he forms an ideal love for his school teacher and wins a great voting contest for her; how he patiently saves his pennies to get himself "fixed"; how his faithful dog is killed and the shock it brings to the frail little soul; how he struggles onward, upward, and at last comes into his birthright—all these are incidents of a story the kindly humor and infinite pathos of which are deeply appealing.

"There are tears and smiles in every chapter of 'The Little King of Angel's Landing.'"—*Denver Post.*

"There is a mighty human interest—a something that takes hold of your heart and sometimes hurts it a bit, but which presently makes you correspondingly glad—in 'The Little King of Angel's Landing.'"
—*Cincinnati Times-Star.*

The House of Hawley.

By ELMORE ELLIOTT PEAKE. Ornamental Cloth, $1.50.

"'The House of Hawley,' by Elmore Elliott Peake, is one of the 'homiest' stories we have met in a long while. . . . Instead of calling so often for the great American novel, perhaps we should give more attention to the many good American novels, of which 'The House of Hawley' is one, containing faithful and interesting portrayal of life in some one of the many and diversified sections of the country."
—*New York Globe.*

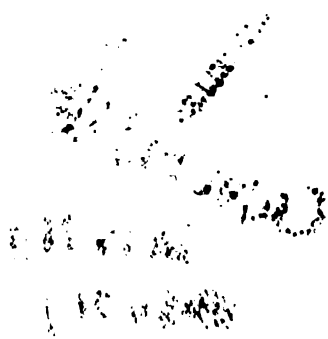
"There is not a dull page in the whole book. It is well worth reading."—*St. Louis Star.*

"'The House of Hawley' is a fresh, readable story by Elmore Elliott Peake, the theme of which is laid in the 'Egypt' of southern Illinois. The title fits better than usual, and the characters depicted are real people. There is not a single stick of dead timber among the various men and women."—*Chicago Record-Herald.*

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED THE COST OF OVERDUE NOTIFICATION IF THIS BOOK IS NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW.

BOOK DUE-WID
FEB 5 1979
CANCELLED
AUG 9 1980
NOV 20 1980
CANCELLED
WIDENER
BOOK DUE
CANCELLED
JUN 2 8 1982

Digitized by Google